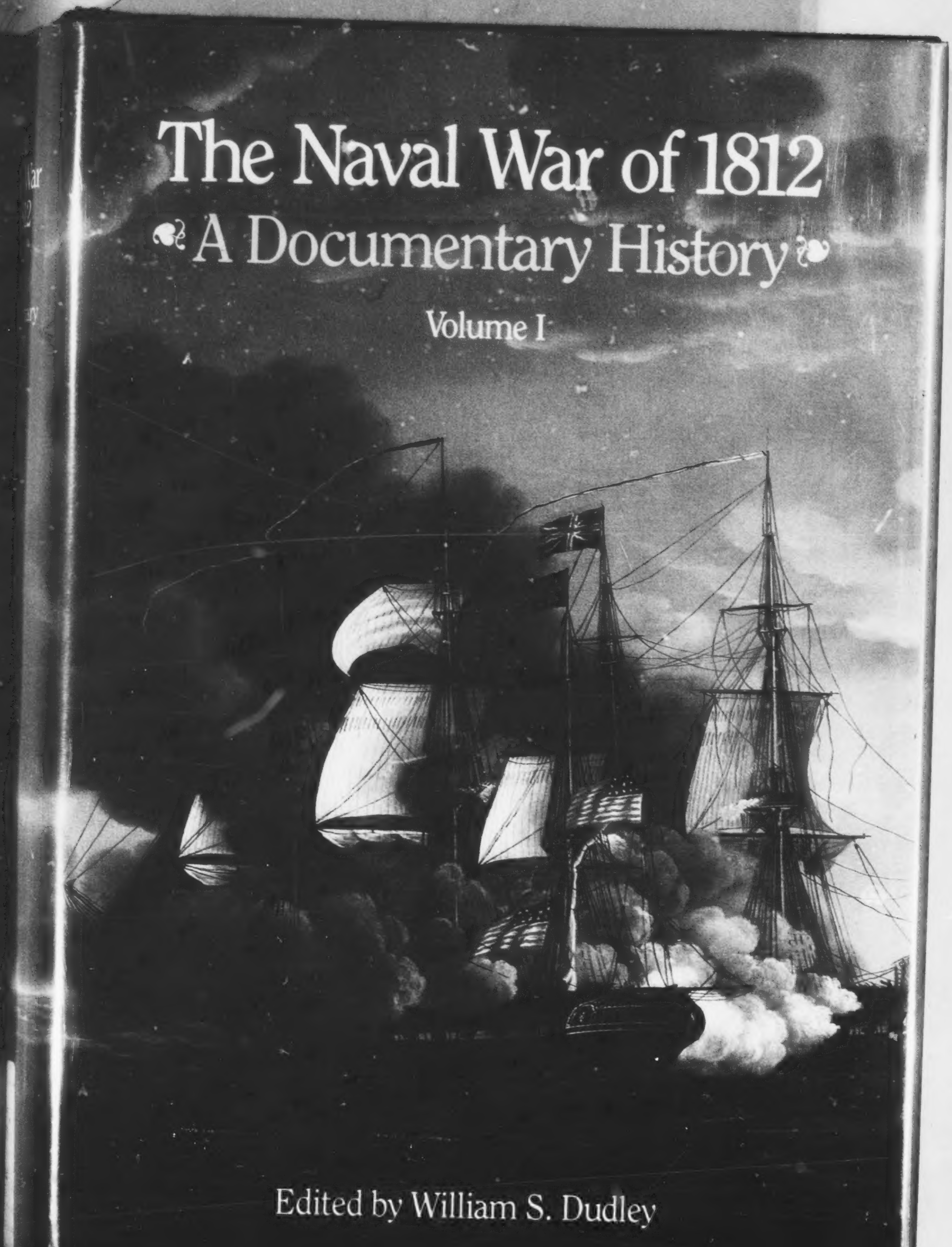

The Naval War of 1812

A Documentary History

Volume I

Edited by William S. Dudley

The Naval War of 1812

❦ A Documentary History ❧

Volume I

The first of a three-volume documentary history on the naval and maritime aspects of the War of 1812, this publication begins with an introduction that briefly summarizes the fortunes of the navy from 1783 to 1805. It concludes with the USS *Constitution*'s victory over HMS *Java* in December 1812. The two succeeding volumes will cover 1813 and 1814-1815 respectively.

During the War of 1812 the U.S. Navy came of age. In fleet actions on the lakes and single-ship engagements at sea, American men of war defeated Royal Navy ships of similar force. Naval officers such as Isaac Hull, Stephen Decatur, Oliver H. Perry, David Porter, and Thomas Macdonough became heroes, and their ships, *Constitution, United States, Niagara, Essex,* and *Saratoga,* symbols for an American public proud of its navy. The three volumes will again call to mind the famous naval actions and events of our "second war of independence with Great Britain."

The history of the navy during the War of 1812 is not, however, simply a tale of glory. Documents on such diverse subjects as the causes of the war from a maritime perspective, the navy's preparedness for operations, the recruitment of seamen and marines, the construction and fitting out of ships, the treatment of sick and wounded men, questions of insubordination, incompetence and jealousy among officers and men, matters relating to the supply of food, drink, clothing, armaments and spars for navy crews and ships, the operations of privateers and the plight of prisoners of war are included.

The documents were selected from a wide variety of sources to create an overall picture of the war effort, including British and American plans and reports, personal letters, ships' logs, and newspaper items. The documents are arranged chronologically by topic or theater of operations. Explanatory texts introduce and provide context for individual documents, or groups of documents, combining them into a coherent and interesting historical account of the war. We hope as well, that the selections stimulate interest in, and provide a basis for, further scholarly study of the War of 1812.

William S. Dudley is presently head of the Historical Research Branch of the Naval Historical Center. His association with the U.S. Navy began with Officer Candidate School at Newport, Rhode Island. After serving in various billets with the Atlantic destroyer force for three years, he returned to civilian life to attend Columbia University, receiving his Ph.D. in 1972. He taught history at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas, before joining the Naval Historical Center in 1977. He is also editor of the multi-volume series ***Naval Documents of the American Revolution.*** His other publications include ***Going South: U.S. Navy Officer Resignations & Dismissals on the Eve of the Civil War,*** "Captain James Lawrence: Fallen Naval Hero," "Maryland At War on the Chesapeake," and several articles on the Brazilian Army.

H62/V.1

JOURNAL, kept on board armed Schooner Saratoga of 16 guns, Charles W. Wooster Esq Commander, by John Backus

H	K	F	Course.	Winds.	Occurrences, remarks and historical events, &c. on board armed Schooner Saratoga C. W. Wooster Esq. Commander, on Friday the 11th day of Dec year 1812	Result of Day's work.

Moderate Trades and pleasant weather at ½ past 12 a sail hove in sight to
windward Tacked and Stood in for our boat being on shore for the Capt at 2
P.M. our boat returned with the Capt. immediately made all sail in chase
at ½ past 3 perceived an English Jack at the foretopmast head of a Schooner at
4 Tacked stood in Shore to endeavor to cut her off on which she hauled in for the
land sent our small boat with six men armed in order if possible to take
charge of her before she could reach the Shore at ½ past 4 the boat boarded
her. she hauled down her colours within half pistol shot of the beach. took
possession of her and stood off Laguira bearing at the same time S W 6 leagues dist
she proved to be the British Schooner Mariah belonging to St Thomas 4 days
out bound to Laguira Laden with Flour & 110 & 31 Boxes Trunks of dry goods retained
one prisoner on board sent the remainder with their baggage on shore
they being English French and Spaniards at the request of the american Con=
sul took Capt. Monentys and 10 men on board who had been 5 or 6 months
on shore at Laguira at 6 P.M. Laguira bore S b W 6 Leagues dist.
Stood off and on under Easy sail Prize in Co at 6 A.M. Laguira bore S 9
Leagues distant. Tacked and Stood in at 8 A.M. saw a Brig to the westward

Distance per Log

Course made good
Distance
Diff. Lat.
Departure
Lat. by D. R.
Lat. by Obs.
Diff. Long.
Long. in
Bearing and Dist.
Var'n. per amp'de
Var'n per azimuth
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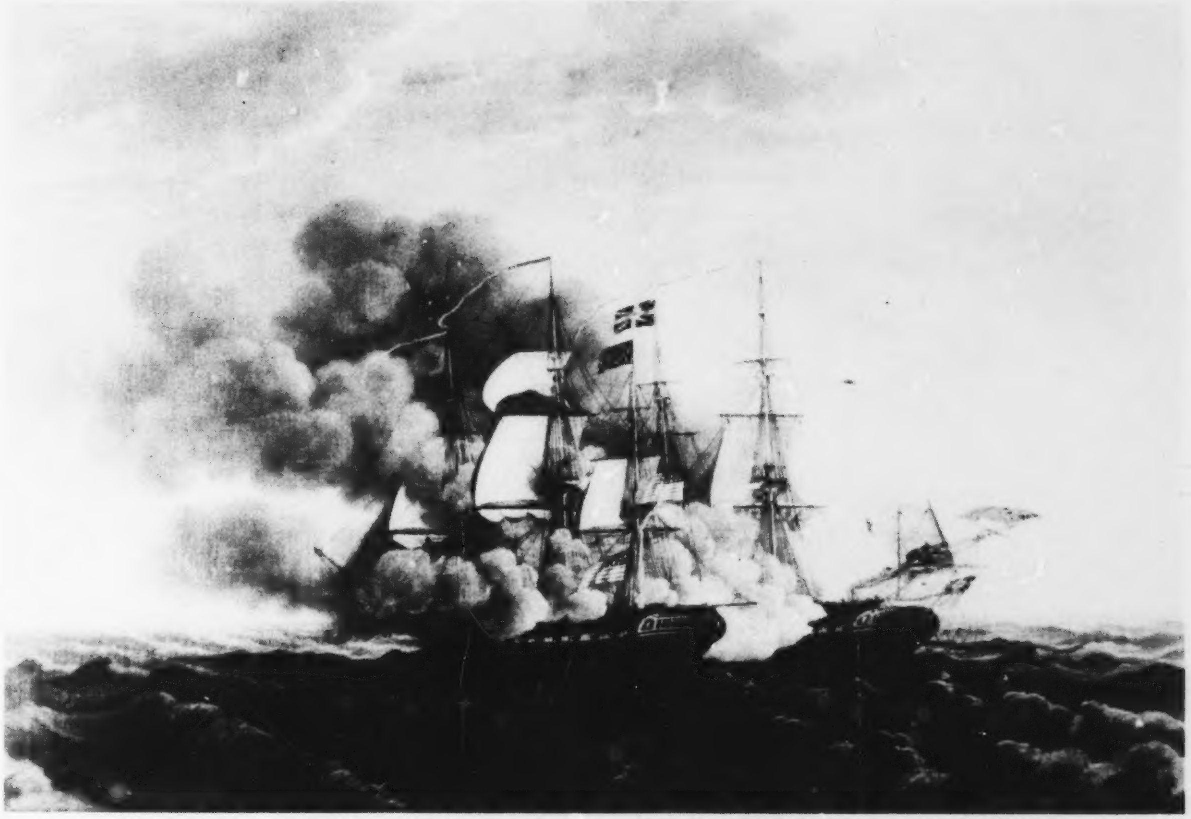
A Documentary History



Engagement Between U.S.S. Constitution *and H.M.S.* Guerriere*, 19 August 1812*

THE NAVAL WAR OF 1812

A Documentary History

Volume I
1812

WILLIAM S. DUDLEY
Editor

MICHAEL J. CRAWFORD
Associate Editor

With a Foreword by
REAR ADMIRAL JOHN D. H. KANE, JR., USN (RET.)
Director of the Naval Historical Center

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CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS

DEDICATION

This book is the first of a three-volume series of naval documents from the War of 1812. The purpose of this series is to publish rare, inaccessible and deteriorating documents for the enlightment of all who wish to study the origins of American sea power.

The importance of the War of 1812 extends to our time. The image of a diminutive United States Navy confronting the British maritime giant is one that has passed from generation to generation. The fact is that the British Navy, while very large, had world-wide responsibilities. During the first year of the war, which this volume presents, the number and size of British warships on the North American Station did not overpower vastly the force available to the U. S. Navy. The frigates CONSTITUTION and UNITED STATES defeated HMS GUERRIERE, JAVA and MACEDONIAN in three separate actions in the Atlantic, fortifying the national will with the example of a Navy ready to fight and prepared to win.

As the war continued into 1813 and 1814, Great Britain was able to bring more naval forces to bear, restricting the pugnacious Americans to occasional sorties from fogbound ports. Perhaps the U. S. Navy's greatest contribution to the war was made on Lakes Erie, Ontario and Champlain, where joint operations were essential to thwarting British invasion plans and to protecting any American thrust into Canadian territory.

As our nation nears the 175th anniversary of the War of 1812, these published documents restore freshness to that conflict. Many sacrifices were made by sailors and marines, fighting for a cause whose outcome was often in doubt. The results were worthy of the effort. The United States emerged from the war with a renewed sense of sovereignty and self-confidence. There is no doubt the U. S. Navy contributed mightily to this outcome.

It is a pleasure to see the appearance of the Naval Historical Center's The Naval War of 1812: A Documentary History. These volumes bring to the reader the immediacy of the moment in the words of the participants and commentators of the time. One man's tireless efforts established this approach to naval history. With this in mind, I wish to dedicate this work to Commodore Dudley W. Knox, U. S. Navy (1877-1960), who headed the Office of Naval Records and Library for 25 years and was editor of the Navy's first documentary series. I am sure he would be pleased with the continuation of his efforts.

Jas D. Watkins

JAMES D. WATKINS
Admiral, U. S. Navy

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Foreword

In 1938, the Office of Naval Records and Library published the first volume of a series of naval documents covering the wars of the United States with the Barbary states. President Franklin D. Roosevelt wrote, in a foreword to that initial volume: "It is my earnest hope that the printing of naval manuscripts relating to the War of 1812 and other naval phases of our national life may follow."

Commodore Dudley W. Knox, director of the Office of Naval Records and Library, edited the Barbary Wars series, as well as seven earlier volumes on the Quasi-War with France. The final volume of the Barbary Wars series appeared in 1944. Twenty years later, treatment of another naval phase of "our national life" got under way with the publication of the first volume of *Naval Documents of the American Revolution*. At this writing, eight volumes of this undertaking have appeared. While the need for documentary coverage of the navy in the War of 1812 was evident, as President Roosevelt had recognized, demands on a small professional staff and economic considerations made it impossible to initiate an endeavor for a number of years. In 1978, however, it seemed feasible for a new staff member, Dr. William S. Dudley, to devote a portion of his time to planning a War of 1812 project. I outlined the concept to the Secretary of the Navy's Advisory Committee on Naval History, which enthusiastically endorsed it.

From the beginning, we recognized that the Center's manpower resources could not sustain two projects on the magnitude of the American Revolution documentary series. The limits of our coverage for the War of 1812 had to be much narrower. From an abundance of pertinent documents, only a modest number of those judged to be the most representative and significant have been selected for inclusion in this three-volume work.

As explained in the editor's preface, the documents are presented chronologically by topic or theater of operations. Explanatory text introduces individual documents or groups of documents, providing a context for the events described. The present volume begins with an introduction which briefly summarizes the fortunes of the American navy from 1775 to 1805. The first chapter prepares the reader for the "second war of independence with Great Britain." Included are introductory essays and documents concerning naval preparedness, Jefferson's gunboats and embargo, impressment of seamen, and the dramatic *Chesapeake–Leopard* and *President–Little Belt* affairs. These matters portray the deterioration of Anglo-American relations and the United States' declaration of war against Great Britain. The next four chapters present documents on the Atlantic theater through August 1812, the northern lakes, the Gulf Coast, and then return to the Atlantic theater through December 1812. The volume closes with Commodore William Bainbridge's victory in U.S. frigate *Constitution* over H.M. frigate *Java*, a battle which symbolized American prowess at sea during a troubled first year of war with a more powerful enemy.

During the War of 1812, the United States Navy came of age. Fleet actions on the lakes and single-ship engagements at sea showed that American warships could more than match Royal Navy ships of similar force. The war also demonstrated, however, that with far fewer ships than the enemy had, the United States could neither lift strangling naval blockades nor prevent harassment along the coast and the burning of Washington. Lessons with broad implications, even for the present time, can be drawn from this experience. Even so, the War of 1812 deserves more attention from historians than it has received. Certainly, Alfred Thayer Mahan and Theodore Roosevelt addressed the subject, and Oliver H. Perry, Stephen Decatur, and Isaac Hull have had their biographers, but the bibliography is modest when compared with that of the American Revolution, the Civil War, or World War II.

We hope that this study will attract a wide and varied audience. The entire spectrum from casual reader to serious researcher can use the book with interest and profit. We hope, as well, that the selected documents presented here will act as a lure to further scholarly investigation and further publication so that the War of 1812 can assume its rightful place in the literature of this nation's naval heritage.

JOHN D. H. KANE, JR.

Preface

This volume is presented as the first of a three-volume documentary history of the United States Navy in the War of 1812. As such, it contains selected documents which display the flavor and substance of maritime warfare between the United States and Great Britain during the period 1812-1815. We have drawn heavily on naval records held by the National Archives and Records Service. To these we have added others reflecting a variety of viewpoints: the plans and reports of British naval officers who engaged our forces, newspaper columns of the day, statements of civilian officials who were charged with direction of the war, and the papers of private citizens who chose to go to war for personal profit though at great risk. To guide readers in their use of these documents and as a unifying medium, brief essays and headnotes are provided.

The method of organizing the historical materials contained in this work is basically chronological by theaters of operation. After a presentation of documents related to the maritime causes of the war, each of three theaters, Atlantic, Northern Lakes, and Gulf Coast, will be treated in separate chapters. Occasionally, there will be exceptions to strict chronological order within these theaters, when topical treatment of documents provides a more meaningful context. The events contained in this volume will cover the period from 1805, the year that marked the end of the Tripolitan War, until the end of December 1812. This dividing line, although arbitrarily chosen, is nonetheless appropriate because it marks the end of the first year of a war that lasted for nearly three years. The two succeeding volumes will deal with the events of 1813 and 1814-1815, respectively.

This documentary history is more than a recounting of naval battles from eyewitness reports. There are many works which have treated the naval engagements of the War of 1812. The objective of this work is to display the underpinnings of the U.S. Navy during the era of the War of 1812, and in this way to help explain both its successes and failures at a formative time in its institutional history. The substance of this book is the life of the navy. It includes documents on such diverse subjects as the causes of the war from a maritime perspective, the navy's preparedness for operations, the recruitment of seamen and marines, the construction and fitting out of ships, the treatment of sick and wounded men, questions of insubordination, incompetence, and jealousy among officers and men, matters relating to the supply of food, drink, clothing, armaments, and spars for navy crews and ships, the operations of privateers, as well as navy warships, and the plight of men held as prisoners of war. In short, these pages will show the American navy as a human institution, with all the nobility and frailty that phrase implies. It is hoped that the documents in this volume will provide glimpses of the U.S. Navy long forgotten or perhaps as yet unknown to a majority of readers. Specialists will be familiar with much of the material but its variety should stimulate research in new directions. If this work sparks such a process, then it can be said to have been a worthwhile effort.

This documents project has been in progress since 1978 and has involved the efforts of many dedicated individuals, working within and outside of the Naval Historical Center. Rear Admiral John D. H. Kane, Jr., the Director of Naval History, urged the Historical Research Branch to take up the project and has been an enthusiastic advocate ever since. Of prime importance to this undertaking was the constant support and wisdom of Dr. William J. Morgan, former Head of the Historical Research Branch and now Senior Historian Emeritus of the Naval Historical Center. He encouraged this work despite his knowledge that assigning staff to a War of 1812 project would reduce the number of people available to work on his prestigious *Naval Documents of the American Revolution* series. To assist in multiple editing chores Ensign Meredith Leach was assigned as a principal assistant for research. She participated in the exacting tasks of document search, preliminary selection, and transcription. She made a strong contribution by surveying a vast number of microfilm collections in the National Archives and in helping to select representative documents. Ensign Leach's relief in 1981, Lieutenant Donna Nelson Geiger, continued all of these tasks and, developing valuable expertise in the subject matter, extended coverage into new areas. She ably helped edit galleys. Joye Leonhart contributed her skills as an illustrations researcher and printing specialist, working with the Naval Publications and Printing Service to ensure that this new publication proceeded properly through its many printing phases. Tamara Moser Melia, Dr. Michael A. Palmer, and Lieutenant Marycarol Hennessy rendered great assistance in editing galleys and page proofs and in preparing the index. As no publication project can succeed without a fine typist, we were particularly fortunate in having Jane Huie's expert typing skills and unfailing good humor on hand for the completion of the more than 1,000 pages of typescript that were sent to the printer. Darnese Ferguson arrived in early 1983 to succeed Mrs. Huie, competently typed the index and assisted in many other ways.

As usual in publishing a book such as this, many Naval Historical Center employees were called upon for assistance. To Stanley Kalkus, the Director of the Navy Department Library, to his assistant, John Vajda, and to Barbara Lynch, an expert reference librarian, we are indebted for efficient service and willing cooperation with the many requests made for obscure works, difficult citations, and liaison with the Library of Congress. Charles Haberlein and Agnes Hoover of the Curator Branch Photographic Section provided advice and information regarding the many possibilities for illustrating the volume. The personnel of Dr. Dean Allard's Operational Archives Branch were always willing to search for biographical data in their Early Naval Records Section.

Many archival institutions and libraries provided us with information and copies of documents and illustrations from their repositories. Most notably included in this category are the Navy and Old Army Branch of the National Archives and Records Service, the Library of Congress, the Public Archives of Canada, the National Maritime Museum of Greenwich, England, and the Public Record Office in London. Unpublished Crown copyright material in the Public Record Office is reproduced by permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. Other helpful institutions included: the Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society, the Chicago Historical Society, the William L. Clements Library at Ann Arbor, Michigan, the Essex Institute and Peabody Museum of Salem, Massachusetts, the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Library, the Maryland Historical Society, the New-York Historical Society, and the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. The United States Naval Academy Museum provided us with considerable assistance and access to their collection as did the Special Collections Division of the Nimitz Library at the Naval Academy.

Foremost among those groups and individuals who have provided us with support and encouragement are the Secretary of the Navy's Advisory Committee on Naval History, presided over by Dr. Richard W. Leopold. The advice and counsel offered by the committee have been of great value. Two independent authorities on United States naval history were asked to read and comment on the prepared typescript. Professor K. Jack Bauer of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and Professor Christopher McKee of Grinnell College reviewed the work and made several excellent suggestions, despite many other demands on their time. Commander Alexander Douglas, Director of the Canadian Defense History Directorate, has shown a friendly and stimulating interest in this project from the beginning and has encouraged further research in British records regarding the naval war on the Great Lakes and Lake Champlain. To these individuals and all others connected with this project, we are indebted and truly grateful.

W. S. DUDLEY

Editorial Method

Selection

There are thousands of naval documents available in the National Archives, Library of Congress, and other repositories, from which we have selected a few hundred as being representative of the War of 1812. Our intention has been to choose documents evocative of topics and persons of that period. With citations and references provided, the interested reader should be able to locate similar classes of documents of the particular period and theater of war in question. The majority of documents selected for publication are of an official nature, addressed to the secretary of the navy by officers in command of ships or naval stations. Added to these are orders from the secretary to his commanders, excerpts from logs and journals, and letters to the Navy Department from private citizens. As privateers were very active during the war, papers representing their activities are also included, but the privateering record is very incomplete. When appropriate, we have selected documentation from British sources to balance the perspective presented by American sources.

In most cases, the version printed is the original letter or recipient's copy; it frequently happened, however, that the original never reached its destination. Authors of letters customarily took the precaution of sending at least one and sometimes two copies to ensure arrival of their communication. Where a copy is printed, it will be so designated in the source note. The word "copy" will only appear in the text if it is actually a part of the original manuscript itself. The list of abbreviations on page xv identifies other types of documents printed.

The secretary of the navy carried on a vast correspondence with all ranks of officers, for he was the operational chief of the navy as well as its principal administrator. The most complete record of the secretary's outgoing correspondence is contained in letterbooks into which departmental clerks copied each letter, but not its enclosures. The original letters were drafted by the clerks and then signed by the secretary. On rare occasions, when the secretary was indisposed or out of the city of Washington, the chief clerk, Charles Goldsborough, and later Benjamin Homans, would sign for the secretary. The original letters are not extant in most cases. Consequently, the secretary of the navy letters that we have printed have been obtained from departmental letterbooks. When an original secretary letter has been found, it will be so indicated in the source footnote. When unofficial correspondence is printed, customary source information will be provided.

Transcription

In transcribing documents, we have adhered as closely as possible to the original in spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and abbreviation. When proper names are misspelled in the text, the transcription retains that misspelling, but if the word is so unclear as to be misleading, the correct spelling is placed in bracketed italics. Original capitalization, or lack of it, is followed, even at the beginning of sentences. The punctuation used is that of the original document, with one exception. In the early 19th century, dashes were often used in place of periods, commas, semi-colons, and question marks; most of these dashes will be replaced by appropriate modern punctuation. Abbreviations and contractions used in the original have been retained, including ampersands and ditto marks; however, superscripts commonly used with abbreviations of the time have been used only on signature lines of autograph letters.

Missing, Incorrect, and Indecipherable Words

Where a manuscript has been damaged or contains indecipherable words, we silently supply the missing letters, if there were no more than four. If more than four letters, or entire words are missing, we supply them in roman type enclosed in brackets, adding a question mark within brackets if the conjecture is doubtful. On the other hand, if there is an opportunity to add a word or phrase to clarify meaning, the added material will be printed in roman within brackets immediately after the affected word. But, if the original author has erred, we will provide the correction in bracketed italics. For the reader's convenience, here are some examples of our procedures:

1. Rank and last name of an officer are contained in the text, but his first name is missing. Editor provides the missing information: Lieutenant [William] Bush.

2. Rank and last name are provided in the text, but the first name is stated incorrectly. Editor provides the correct first name: Lieutenant Robert [*William*] Bush.

3. Rank and last name appear but not first name. After research, editor is not certain but has reasonable idea of officer's identity: Lieutenant [William?] Bush.

Annotations

The first note following the documentary text is unnumbered and gives a description and the source of the document. Numbered footnotes will provide only essential clarification, explanation, or information about persons, places, or subjects mentioned in the text. Rather than burden the reader with lengthy footnotes, we prefer to cite relevant scholarship or reference material, trusting that the reader's curiosity will lead to a consultation of informed sources. Letters cited by date in the text of a document will be provided a full citation if considered relevant to the subject under discussion. Enclosures will generally be included immediately following the text of the original letter. If the enclosure is too lengthy or is not deemed of sufficient importance to be printed, a footnote commentary will usually be provided.

Headings

The title or rank, first name, middle initial, and last name of originators and recipients of documents will precede the documents when known. Document datelines will be provided as they appear in the original. If an address forms part of the salutation, it is retained, as are the complimentary close, signature, and postscripts. However, the complimentary close will be abbreviated unless it is of an unusual nature. Address and endorsements on the reverse side of a letter are omitted, but any meaningful information they contain will be discussed in footnotes. Internal notes added by the recipient will be included in footnotes. If a document is extracted from a longer document, this designation will appear in bracketed roman type at the left margin below the heading.

Headnotes

From the outset, it has been intended that this collection of printed documents should be taken as selections from a vast body of material. There will, consequently, be gaps in coverage of events. Documents do not always speak for themselves. With the passage of time, a document's context and environment are blurred or forgotten. A documentary text has several meanings: a meaning in itself, a meaning in relationship to events that occurred immediately before, during, and after the document's creation, and a meaning from the perspective of hindsight. Each reader approaches a historical document with a different viewpoint, depending on the extent of his reading and understanding of history. In order to blend these meanings into a whole thought, introductory statements are provided for documents which stand either alone or in related groups. Frequently, the reader will find citations to scholarly material which will amplify the introductory matter. It is to be hoped that the headnotes provided will enlighten and not confuse the reader with more information than necessary. They are included to afford those interested a better perspective on events than what might be obtained only through the document itself.

List of Abbreviations

SYMBOLS USED TO DESCRIBE MANUSCRIPTS

ADS	Autograph Document Signed
AL	Autograph Letter
ALS	Autograph Letter Signed
D	Document
DS	Document Signed
LS	Letter Signed

SHORT TITLES, ABBREVIATIONS, AND LOCATION SYMBOLS

Adm.	Admiralty
AF	Area File
ASP	*American State Papers: Documents, Legislative and Executive, of the Congress of the United States . . . Selected and Edited under the Authority of Congress* . . . .Washington, D.C., 1832-1861. 38 vols.
BC	Letters from Officers of Rank Below that of Commanders Received by the Secretary of the Navy
CGO	Directives ("Circulars and General Orders"), Navy Department
CL	Captains Letters to Secretary of the Navy
CMC	Office of the Commandant, U.S. Marine Corps
CNA	Letters Sent by Secretary of the Navy to Commandants and Navy Agents
DNA	National Archives and Records Service, Washington, D.C.
MC	Masters Commandant Letters Received by Secretary of the Navy
MLR	Miscellaneous Letters Received by Secretary of the Navy
MLS	Miscellaneous Letters Sent by Secretary of the Navy
NBuHi	Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society, Buffalo, N.Y.
PHi	Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pa.
RG	Record Group
RS	Records of the U.S. Senate
SNL	Secretary of the Navy Letters to Officers, Ships of War
UkLPR	Public Record Office, London

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Introduction

The American Navy: 1775-1805

From the founding of the Continental Navy in October 1775 to the passage of the Naval Peace Establishment Act in April 1806, the United States Navy suffered difficulties no less severe than those of the fledgling nation it defended. To contend with the overwhelming naval superiority of Great Britain during the American Revolution, the Continental Congress established the apparatus to build a small navy which was essentially insufficient to deter the Royal Navy from its depredations upon American merchant shipping, and fishing vessels, and invasions of American coastal bays, harbors, rivers, and inland lakes. The precedent was set by Washington's "fleet," a handful of Marblehead privateers commissioned to interdict General Gage's supply lines at Boston. Congress, during the years 1775-1783, authorized the purchase, construction, or hire of some forty vessels of all types-cutters, sloops, schooners, brigs, and frigates-to sail the high seas in defense of American liberties. These do not include the smaller vessels built for Benedict Arnold's "fleet" on Lake Champlain or those constructed by individual states for their own navies, which were also encouraged by act of Congress.

The logistical problems encountered in building the Continental Navy, difficulties in manning and fitting out ships in competition with privateers, and the running of the British blockade in one way or another affected the histories of each of these ships. While they occasionally sailed in company, they were frequently picked off by the British as they operated independently or suffered mishaps usually risked by men under sail. Those that saw action generally fought hard and well before succumbing to superior force. Some took prizes, but most did not see the end of the war. The last frigate of the Continental Navy, Captain John Barry's *Alliance*, was sold in 1785.

Foreseeing that the British Navy would be one of the foremost obstacles to a successful rebellion, the Continental Congress encouraged the former colonies to provide vessels at their own expense to protect their harbors, coastlines, and trading vessels. Eventually, all the states except Delaware and New Jersey created navies. The larger navies of Massachusetts, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and South Carolina had ships of sufficient force to sail the high seas and to take British merchantmen and transports as prizes. Ships of the smaller navies were generally utilized as lookout vessels or as cruisers on bays and rivers to protect American merchant ships close to their home ports and to attack waterborne Tories who preyed on patriot commerce. The Maryland Navy provided the best example of this type of activity, and additionally aided in the supply and transport of the Continental and French armies as they contended with British campaigns in Virginia and the Carolinas. State navies made a larger contribution than is generally acknowledged, despite dire shortages of money, equipment, and seamen who usually preferred to ship on board privateers.

Making up in numbers what the Continental Navy lacked, American privateers of all descriptions sailed in ever larger numbers from the late 1770s until the end of the Revolutionary War. More than 100 privateers sailed from our ports each year of the war except for 1777 when a substantial 73 vessels departed on these missions. In 1781, privateers on the high seas numbered more than 400. This uncoordinated force took, it has been claimed, some 600 British prizes, as opposed to 196 prizes taken by Continental Navy vessels.[1] These figures have yet to be verified by modern scholars but even if only generally accurate, they indicate that United States mariners, when sufficiently motivated, could exact a costly toll in enemy shipping.

A view of the maritime aspects of the American Revolution from another perspective shows that the Royal Navy had great advantages over the Continental Navy, but was unable to exploit them. Not only were the British deprived of their traditional supply of spars, naval stores, and seamen, but also their forces were thinly spread along the North American coastline. There was a perceived need to patrol the English Channel, maintain a home fleet against the possibility of invasion from France, and reinforce naval forces in the Mediterranean and the West Indies. The problem of widely dispersed ships became particularly acute after the signing of the French-American treaties in 1778 and Spain's entry into war on the side of France during the next year. The appearance of French fleets on the North American coast altered the strategic picture. They demonstrated how vulnerable Britain's land forces were when a significant enemy naval force carried new armies to the battleground, threatened to cut her trans-Atlantic supply lines, and seized British bases in the Caribbean. The allies' capture of General Cornwallis's army at Yorktown in 1781 owed much to the French Navy's victory at the Battle off the Virginia Capes. The Maryland Navy, consisting mainly of row galleys and barges, assisted in the transporting of French and American troops and supplies on Chesapeake Bay during the siege at Yorktown. The Continental Navy, however, played no part in this decisive event, but the strategic and tactical uses of seapower are clearly evident in the outcome.

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[1] Edgar Stanton Maclay, *A History of American Privateers* (New York, 1899; reprint ed., New York & London, 1924), pp. viii-ix.

Despite statements by revolutionary leaders such as George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and Robert Morris, to the effect that at least a small and competent naval force would be necessary to protect our shores and commerce, the post-war era was disastrous for American naval power. From 1785 to 1794, the United States had neither a navy nor a naval policy. Under the Articles of Confederation, the United States government was in financial straits, and was in no condition to build a navy. As a result, American statesmen were unable to secure Britain's complete compliance with the terms of the Treaty of Paris, to obtain Spain's acknowledgement of the United States' right to use the lower Mississippi River, or to win respect for American merchant shipping in foreign waters.

Acute regionalism and the rise of extreme party loyalties among politicians delayed action on the re-establishment of a navy during George Washington's first administration (1789-1793). American seamen had been seized by Algerian pirates and were being held hostage as early as 1787. With the outbreak of the French Revolution in 1789, European nations began to align themselves against changes in the social and world order that the new forces in France represented. Open warfare, led at sea by the British Royal Navy, broke out against the French Republic. It was not long before the United States was drawn gradually into these embroilments despite an ardent desire to avoid Old World feuds.

A debate over the need to have a navy erupted in 1794, as men of the Federalist party seized upon the issue of captive American seamen held by Algiers as a means of passing a naval construction bill. Anti-Federalist congressmen, representing inland and western sections of the country, saw a danger in a navy that today may seem surprising. The construction of a "standing" or permanent navy appeared to strengthen the domestic political position of the Federalist party in power which was then a coalition of seaboard merchants, shippers, and planters. To reinforce this argument, anti-navalists argued that even to attempt to defend our merchant ships would be to invite an overwhelming retaliation from much larger European naval forces. Furthermore, it would be far cheaper to ransom any seamen held hostage on the Barbary Coast than to build a navy.

Navalists, on the other hand, argued that without a respectable naval force, illegal seizures of merchantmen and their crews would continue. Although a navy would be a large expense, it was preferable to the disreputable paying of ransom on demand. A respectable navy coincided with Federalist views on the United States' future role as an equal to the great nations of the world. To lack a navy would have been incompatible with their view of America's destiny. When it came down to a specific case, as in whether the United States would continue to suffer Algerine depredations in the Mediterranean, enough anti-navalists yielded to allow passage of the "Act to Provide a Naval Armament" on 27 March 1794. This law provided for the building, equipping, and manning of four 44-gun frigates and two of 36 guns; anti-naval congressmen, however, were not yet ready to allow for a permanent naval force. The last section of the law stipulated that if a peace were signed between Algiers and the United States, construction would halt at that point.

Plans for construction of the six frigates proceeded forthwith during the next two years, but in early 1796 a peace was arranged by the Dey of Algiers. Under the terms of the law, construction was to halt, but pro-naval senators took steps to forestall it. They passed a bill authorizing the president to complete at least three frigates and as many as all six at his discretion. Anti-naval members of the House of Representatives opposed this, and the bill that passed authorized the completion of three frigates only.

The outbreak of the undeclared Quasi-War with France during John Adams's presidency (1797-1801), provided Federalists with the arguments they needed to spur continued naval construction and the creation of a separate department to oversee naval matters. The overburdened secretary of war, James McHenry, followed the urgings of

Alexander Hamilton and others who proposed the creation of a Department of the Navy. Despite Republican opposition, Congress established the department on 30 April 1798. Subsequently, John Adams selected Benjamin Stoddert, a Marylander, as the first secretary of the navy. These actions ensured permanency for the American naval establishment, but it was the feeling of urgency accompanying the French attacks on our maritime trade that had finally convinced Congress that the United States needed a navy.

With Secretary Stoddert at the helm supported enthusiastically by President Adams, the United States Navy made significant headway. The frigates *Constitution*, *United States*, and *Constellation* were still under construction. Their first captains were Samuel Nicholson, John Barry, and Thomas Truxtun, respectively. During 1798 and 1799, while other frigates were being built, eight additional vessels, including six ships and two brigs, were purchased for the navy. These became *Baltimore*, *Ganges*, *Delaware*, *Herald*, *Montezuma*, *George Washington*, *Norfolk*, and *Augusta*. The purchased ships were supplemented by *Adams* and *General Greene*, which were frigates, and smaller ships such as *Portsmouth*, *Warren*, and *Connecticut*, all built under contract. Schooners *Experiment* and *Enterprise* also entered the lists at this time. The government ordered construction of several galleys under the Act of 4 May 1798. They were to be manned by "naval militia" provided by the army, but the vessels were to be fitted out by the navy. These small, shallow-draft vessels were primarily for use on rivers and coastal bays, reminiscent of the use of similar craft in the Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia navies during the Revolution. Though considered to be of little use during the Quasi-War, their construction set a precedent to which President Jefferson resorted in later years.

The Navy Department also encouraged merchants to build warships by subscription for the navy under the Act of 30 June 1798. Completed in time to be of some use against France, they proved themselves in the Barbary Wars. The largest of these were the frigates *Philadelphia*, *New York*, *Essex*, *Boston*, and *John Adams*. Smaller subscription vessels took less time to finance and build, consequently, several saw service during the Quasi-War. These included *Maryland*, *Patapsco*, *Merrimack*, *Trumbull*, and *Richmond*. Completing the Quasi-War navy were nine revenue vessels, most of which were topsail schooners. Six of these were returned to the Revenue Service, one was lost at sea, and two were sold by the navy by war's end.

Negotiations resulting in a treaty between France and the United States brought an end to naval hostilities in 1801, but in three years of warfare the navy made a significant beginning. American warships fought hundreds of French vessels, privateers as well as French Navy frigates, largely in the Caribbean. Likewise, a large number of privately armed American vessels were licensed to attack armed French ships, though not unarmed enemy merchantmen. Our ships took approximately 85 French vessels as prizes. By the end of the war, there were more than 30 United States Navy ships under construction, fitting out, or active in operations against the French. From the appointment of Captains Barry, Truxtun, and Nicholson in 1794, the navy's manpower increased to 700 officers, 5,000 seamen, and 1,100 marine officers and men during the war. Although the number of men and ships declined sharply thereafter, the United States Navy had been well established in a time of crisis, and through its recent experiences, had gained a sense of purpose, profession, and tradition.

The victories of Jefferson and his party in the elections of 1800 presaged contraction of the navy; to forestall larger cuts Stoddert and Federalist congressional leaders drew up and pushed through Congress the naval Peace Establishment Act of 3 March 1801, reducing the number of ships, officers, and seamen in service.

Jefferson's choices of Albert Gallatin as secretary of the treasury and Robert Smith as secretary of the navy were significant. For years Gallatin had attacked Federalist spending, particularly on the navy. Smith, who belonged to a prominent Baltimore shipping family, was both a Republican and a navalist. Without congressional support, however, and faced with Gallatin's opposition and Jefferson's "small navy" persuasion, he was unable to stem the anti-naval tide. Most of Stoddert's ambitious program for building shipyards, constructing 74-gun ships of the line, and creating the rank of admiral was scrapped.

Since the end of the Revolution, increasing numbers of American merchant ships had sought trade in the Mediterranean. This was done despite the lack of naval protection which Britain had long provided her colonial traders. Minor potentates of the Barbary Coast, the Emperor of Morocco, the Dey of Algiers, the Bey of Tunis, and the Pasha of Tripoli, had subsisted for years on blackmail and piracy off their coasts, held in check only by the navies of the European powers. After the Revolution, Great Britain pointedly refused to provide protection for American shipping in the Mediterranean, and the United States, at first, had little choice but to accommodate demands from these rulers for ransom payments and tribute. Many ships were halted and hundreds of seamen were seized by the Barbary corsairs over the years. A treaty between Algiers and the United States, signed in 1795, provided payment of some $525,000, annual gifts of naval stores, and a new, completely outfitted 36-gun frigate named *Crescent*, in exchange for the freedom of American seamen held in prison or bondage and continued forebearance on the part of Algerian corsairs. The United States' impotence at sea invited humiliating deals such as this and fomented sentiment in Congress sufficient to pass the naval construction bill of 1794. During the hostilities with France in the late 1790s, the United States sent no warships to the Mediterranean. This was justifiable, as James A. Field has said, ". . . on the ground that sound national policy calls for but one war at a time."[2]

At the close of the Quasi-War, however, the Adams administration ordered Commodore Richard Dale to prepare a squadron of four ships for a Mediterranean cruise to prevent the Barbary powers from "breaking the peace" and to ascertain the state of relations between these powers and the United States. If any or all had declared war against us, Dale was ordered to blockade their ports and to "sink, burn, or otherwise destroy their ships and vessels, wherever you find them."[3]

When Dale arrived in the Mediterranean, he discovered that the Pasha of Tripoli had declared war against the United States. Acting on this information, Congress took steps to support Dale and future squadrons on 6 February 1802, by authorizing the president to "equip, officer, man, and employ such of the armed vessels of the United States as may be judged requisite . . . for protecting effectually the commerce and seamen . . ." of the United States on the Atlantic and Mediterranean seas.[4] These events marked the opening of the Barbary Wars and temporarily negated the effect of the Peace Establishment Act of 1801.

For the next three years, Navy Secretary Smith had to contend with the difficulties of supplying and executing a foreign war carried on four thousand miles from American shores. The quick victory originally desired proved to be elusive, and many lessons were learned in how to administer a navy at war, politically and militarily. Many officers who had gained their sea legs and first scars as midshipmen during the Quasi-War earned promotions to lieutenant and master commandant by virtue of Barbary War service. The bravest and shrewdest of these became the captains of the War of 1812. Thus the years 1798 to 1805 provided invaluable schooling for a generation of American naval officers, many of whom would be put to the test during the United States' second war with Britain.

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[2] James A. Field, Jr., *America and the Mediterranean World, 1776–1882* (Princeton, N.J., 1969), p. 38.

[3] Dudley W. Knox, ed., *Naval Documents Related to the United States Wars with the Barbary Powers*, 6 vols. (Washington, D.C., 1939–1944), I: 467.

[4] John F. Callan & A. W. Russell, comp., *Laws of the United States Relating to the Navy and Marine Corps* (Baltimore, 1859), p. 146.

During the course of the Tripolitan War, American squadrons in the Mediterranean were commanded by five different commodores. Richard Dale was succeeded by Richard Morris, whose inactivity dissatisfied Washington. The energetic Edward Preble provided key leadership and he applied all the pressure at his disposal against the recalcitrant Pasha. He established a network of supply bases in various European ports to be run by U.S. naval agents and showed the flag in all major Barbary ports. After Captain Bainbridge's frigate *Philadelphia* ran aground in October 1803, it was Preble's decision to burn her while she was in enemy hands. Lieutenant Stephen Decatur, ably aided by James Lawrence, led the raid that successfully destroyed *Philadelphia* without the loss of a single man. Preble bombarded Tripoli, but soon afterward Captain Samuel Barron arrived with reinforcements and Preble sailed for home. Former American consul to Tunis, William Eaton, accompanied Barron and had a bold plan to force a victory. Eaton, escorted by marines and a small army of natives, marched several hundred miles across the Libyan desert and captured the city of Derna. This event, combined with strengthened naval blockades, broke the will of the Pasha. Samuel Barron's cruise as commodore was cut short by ill health, and he was replaced by Captain John Rodgers in May 1805. A peace treaty was finally agreed upon in June. The terms made no mention of future tribute payments, required the firing of gun salutes for American naval vessels, and the payment of a ransom of $60,000 for the release of the *Philadelphia*'s crew. With this agreement, the Barbary powers became much less troublesome, but fully peaceful relations were not established until after the War of 1812 when Stephen Decatur obtained a lasting peace with a powerful squadron.

To obtain a satisfactory ending to the Tripolitan War, the Navy Department had been obliged to send increasingly powerful squadrons to the Mediterranean, and the last two squadrons possessed vessels varying widely in force and type. The following list indicates the relative strengths of these squadrons:

American Squadron in the Tripolitan War, 1801-1805

Type	Name	Guns	Commanding Officer
	The First Squadron, Richard Dale, 1801		
Frigate	*President*	44	James Barron
Frigate	*Philadelphia*	44	Samuel Barron
Frigate	*Essex*	32	William Bainbridge
Schooner	*Enterprise*	12	Andrew Sterrett
		132	
	The Second Squadron, Richard Morris, 1802		
Frigate	*Chesapeake*	36	Isaac Chauncey
Frigate	*Constellation*	36	Alexander Murray
Frigate	*New York*	36	James Barron
Frigate	*John Adams*	28	John Rodgers
Frigate	*Adams*	28	Hugh G. Campbell
Schooner	*Enterprise*	12	Andrew Sterrett
		176	
	The Third Squadron, Edward Preble, 1803		
Frigate	*Constitution*	44	Edward Preble
Frigate	*Philadelphia*	44	William Bainbridge
Brig	*Argus*	16	Stephen Decatur
Brig	*Siren*	16	Charles Stewart
Schooner	*Nautilus*	12	Richard Somers
Schooner/Brig	*Vixen*	12	John Smith
Schooner	*Enterprise*	12	Isaac Hull
Brig	*Scourge*[5]	16	John H. Dent
		172	

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[5] *Scourge* was originally a privateer brig captured off Tripoli by *Siren* in 1804 and then added to Preble's squadron. Two bomb vessels and six gunboats, manned by Neapolitan seamen, were obtained from Naples under a loan from the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies. Three more gunboats were taken as prizes on 3 Aug. 1804, during raids on Tripoli.

The Fourth Squadron, Samuel Barron/John Rodgers, 1804-1805

Frigate	*Constitution*	44	John Rodgers
Frigate	*President*	44	George Cox
Frigate	*Constellation*	36	Hugh G. Campbell
Frigate	*Congress*	36	Stephen Decatur
Frigate	*Essex*	32	James Barron
Frigate	*John Adams*	28	Isaac Chauncey
Brig	*Siren*	16	Charles Stewart
Brig	*Argus*	16	Isaac Hull
Brig	*Vixen*	12	John Smith
Schooner	*Nautilus*	12	John H. Dent
Schooner	*Enterprise*	12	Thomas Robinson, Jr.
Sloop	*Hornet*[6]	10	Samuel Evans
		298	

The news of the *Philadelphia*'s capture shocked Jefferson and his cabinet. The frigates *President*, *Congress*, *Constellation*, and *Essex* were immediately made ready and dispatched to the Mediterranean, despite previous plans to lay up at least two of them in ordinary as an economy measure.[7] Thus, Commodore Barron's squadron became the strongest yet to participate in the Barbary Wars; it was also the most flexible. Preble had recognized the utility of gunboats for close inshore work and made his own arrangements to obtain such vessels from the King of the Two Sicilies. Prior to this, however, Congress had authorized construction of fifteen gunboats at several shipyards in the United States.[8] Seven of these arrived at Syracuse early in July 1805. They were followed shortly afterward by two bomb ketches, *Spitfire* and *Vengeance*, that had been purchased and fitted out under the orders of Edward Preble at Boston. Two other ships whose construction began during the Tripolitan War were the brig *Hornet* and sloop of war *Wasp*, but they did not arrive in the Mediterranean until 1806 and 1807.

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6. Formerly the *Traveller*, a Massachusetts-built trader bought in Malta, 1804-1805, she remained in the Mediterranean until 1806.

7. Knox, *Barbary Wars*, I: 638; II: 43. Secretary of the Navy Smith notified Commodore Preble of these reinforcements in his letter of 7 May 1804. See Knox, *Barbary Wars*, IV: 88.

8. Callan & Russell, *Laws . . . of the Navy*, pp. 150-51. This law was entitled "An Act to provide an additional armament for the protection of the seamen and commerce of the United States."

During the Tripolitan War, American naval officers learned some concrete lessons about the relationship of war and diplomacy. The Barbary rulers respected no agreement America was unable or unwilling to enforce. The payment of tribute to Algiers had merely led to demands for the same and more from other Barbary states. The first two American squadrons sent to the Mediterranean lacked the strength to gain the Pasha's respect. Their blockades were too weak to close down all shipping and left doubts in Tripoli that the United States had the naval power to enforce any treaty. After Commodore Preble arrived and gave clear demonstrations of his determination to use force, the enemy's behavior became more amenable. Preble's stark sentiment, "these people must not be humour'd but beaten," put increasing pressure on the Pasha.[9]

Americans searched for and found valuable bases in the Mediterranean at Sicily and Venice where the navy hired additional seamen, borrowed gunboats manned by foreign crews, purchased supplies and naval stores, and rebuilt or refitted ships. All of these components were needed for successful naval actions far from the United States. These actions involved blockades, shore bombardment, and amphibious operations, enabling American officers and men to hone valuable fighting skills.

The winding down of the Tripolitan War made it possible to reduce the size of the navy as Jefferson had originally planned in 1801. By the summer of 1806, most of the vessels that had served in the Mediterranean had been laid up in ordinary, and the number of seamen and boys in active duty was fixed at 925. By the fall of 1806, the fleet in active service consisted of one frigate and two small vessels in the Mediterranean and two bomb ketches at New Orleans. In order to survive, many officers still retained on the active list had to look for supplementary employment. A letter from Master Commandant Isaac Chauncey to Edward Preble indicates the straits most of them were in: "Dr Sir, I have obtained a furlough, and have got a ship for China. expect to sail about the 20th of April. If I can bring any thing for you from that country, it will afford me pleasure to receive your commands. I see no prospect of Congress doing any thing for the Navy or officers therefore the sooner we can get good employ in private Ships the better at least for those who has no fortunes to depend on. . . ."[10]

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[9] Preble to U.S. Consul John S. M. Matthiew, Naples, 19 Mar. 1804, Knox, *Barbary Wars*, III: 506.

[10] Chauncey to Preble, 25 Mar. 1806, New-York Historical Society, New York, N.Y., Isaac Chauncey Letterbooks.

As Isaac Chauncey's letter shows, even officers who remained in the navy found themselves without ships or men to command. As a result, many did go on furlough for considerable lengths of time, taking positions as masters on merchant ships around the world. For them, it must have seemed the end of an era. They had fought two naval wars in less than ten years. The navy had justified its existence, at least for these officers, but with the war over and with no visible enemies on the horizon, they found that the navy would be restricted to a handful of fighting ships and a moribund shore establishment. In thirty years, the United States had arisen from seaboard colonies on the margin of the British Empire to become an ungainly, poorly unified collection of states with a rising prosperity drawn from overseas trade and a wealth of natural resources. Her only trained fighting force was the navy which was small indeed compared to the gigantic, diversified fleets belonging to the European maritime powers. From 1805 to 1812, tensions born of war in Europe aggravated ill-feeling and misunderstanding between Great Britain and her former colonies. The documents that follow have been selected to show what these tendencies were and how the United States Navy fared in the uncertain journey from the newly won peace to another war.

Chapter One

The Maritime Causes of the War: 1805–1812

During 1805, at the commencement of President Jefferson's second term, some basic changes took place in the foreign relations of the United States. Throughout his first term Jefferson and Secretary of State James Madison attempted to tread the narrow path of neutrality among the warring nations of Europe. In this way, it seemed that the United States would best protect its flourishing overseas commerce and avoid involvement in an expensive and destructive conflict.

Despite these benign objectives, the maelstrom of international politics gradually drew the United States toward the turbulent waters of the Napoleonic Wars. Jefferson's instincts had led him to attempt resolution of conflicts by peaceful means, but he had been obliged to strengthen the U.S. Navy's Mediterranean squadron by stages until the Tripolitans were defeated. Just as this goal was attained troubles arose with Spain because of the Louisiana Purchase and the onset of the Burr Conspiracy. In the autumn of 1805, the country learned that a British admiralty court decision in the Essex *case (see pp. 16–21) had signalled a stricter British policy regarding America's neutral trade. Henceforth, Royal Navy warships became more aggressive in their harassment of American shipping. British frigates took station off the Atlantic seaports in order to halt and search ships outward bound and returning from European trading voyages. Men suspected of being British subjects were impressed and ships were seized if their papers indicated trade with France or French colonies and allies.*

The Struggle to Increase the Navy

In his fifth annual message to Congress, on 5 December 1805, the president reviewed the hostile environment of the past year and suggested that Congress give consideration to strengthening seaport fortifications, constructing a fleet of gunboats for the protection of harbors, and increasing the readiness of the militia. When he came to the issue of building ships of the line, Jefferson gave no guidance other than to say "considerable provision has been made under former authorities from Congress of materials for the construction of ships of war of 74 guns. These materials are on hand subject to the further will of the Legislature."[1]

Congress discussed naval matters during the winter of 1805–1806 in debates on two issues: the fortification of ports and harbors and the amendment of the Naval Peace Establishment Act of 1801. Committees assigned to the drafting of bills on these topics requested information from Secretary of the Navy Robert Smith. Hoping that the mood of Congress had changed sufficiently, he suggested an appropriation adequate to the construction of 74-gun ships as part of the bill to protect ports and harbors. This, however, was finally disapproved, and the act when passed on 21 April 1806 appropriated $250,000 for the building of gunboats only and $150,000 to improve harbor fortifications. The navy made some progress in the passage of a new Naval Peace Establishment Act. Congress voted to restore the rank of master commandant and increased the number of lieutenants from 56 to 72, but the number of captains allowed was reduced from 15 to 13. The act also allowed the president discretion to decide how many ships to maintain in active service. Jefferson's biographer, Dumas Malone, has stated that the president showed more concern for having a well-balanced navy at this juncture than at any other time during his presidency.[2] *Congress, however, was reluctant to increase the naval force without a more determined advocacy from Jefferson.*[3] *The documents which follow were selected from those which the secretary of the navy forwarded to Congress during the debates of 1805–1806.*

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1. *James D. Richardson, comp.*, A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents, 1789–1897 *(Washington, D.C., 1896), I: 382–88.*

2. *Dumas Malone*, Jefferson and His Time, *vol. 5*, Jefferson the President, Second Term, 1805–1809 *(Boston, 1974), p. 496.*

3. *Craig L. Symonds*, Navalists and Anti-navalists: The Naval Policy Debate in the United States, 1785–1827 *(Newark, Del., 1980), pp. 105–19.*

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY ROBERT SMITH TO ANDREW GREGG, CHAIRMAN, COMMITTEE ON THE NAVAL PEACE ESTABLISHMENT

NAVY DEPARTMENT, *December* 16, 1805

SIR:

The enclosed paper, marked A, exhibits a view of the captains, masters-commandant, lieutenants, and midshipmen, at present belonging to the navy of the United States.

Paper B explains my ideas as to a Naval Peace Establishment.

Paper C exhibits the proportion of able seamen, ordinary seamen, and boys, required for a frigate of forty-four guns, a frigate of thirty-six guns, a frigate of thirty-two guns, a brig of sixteen guns, and a schooner of fourteen guns.

It is desirable that the President should be authorized to appoint five captains, in addition to the number now in the navy. The five senior masters-commandant, who would, if authority existed, be promoted to the stations of captains in the navy, are gentlemen distinguished for their services, who have by courtesy been called captains, and who are, in every respect, entitled to promotion; the greater part of whom I fear we shall lose, if they are not promoted. For similar reasons it is desirable that the President should be authorized to appoint nine masters-commandant, and one hundred lieutenants.

With respect to lieutenants, we have unavoidably been obliged to appoint midshipmen to the station of lieutenants, who were junior to others of equal merit not appointed. It is, therefore, obviously desirable that authority should be given to the President to appoint as many lieutenants as will include all the meritorious midshipmen, senior to the junior midshipmen now appointed or acting as a lieutenant, and thus give them that rank to which they are entitled, by their merit and their services. I am, respectfully, sir, your most obedient servant,

R. SMITH

ANDREW GREGG, Esq.
Chairman of the Committee on the
Naval Peace Establishment

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A.

List of Captains, Masters-Commandant, Lieutenants, Acting Lieutenants, and Midshipmen, in the Navy of the United States.

CAPTAINS.

- Samuel Nicholson, at the Navy Yard, Boston.
- Alexander Murray,
- Samuel Barron,
- John Rodgers,
- Edward Preble,
- James Barron,
- William Bainbridge,
- Hugh G. Campbell,
- Stephen Decatur, Jr.
- Thomas Tingey, at the Navy Yard Washington.

MASTERS-COMMANDANT.

- Charles Stewart,
- Isaac Hull,
- John Shaw,
- Isaac Chauncey,
- John Smith,
- George Cox,
- John H. Dent,
- Thos. Robinson, Jr.

LIEUTENANTS.

- David Porter,
- John Cassin,
- Samuel Evans,
- Charles Gordon,
- Edward Wyer,
- P. C. Wederstrandt,
- Joshua Blake,
- Joseph Tarbell,
- Jacob Jones,
- Theodore Hunt,
- James Lawrence,
- A. C. Harrison,
- D. T. Patterson,
- Daniel Murray,
- James W. Murdoch,
- Nathaniel Haraden,
- Seth Cartee,
- Humphrey Magrath,
- Daniel M'Neill, Jr.
- Ralph Izard,
- George A. Marcellin,
- David Deacon,
- John D. Henley,
- M. B. Carroll,
- Benjamin Smith,
- Charles Ludlow,
- Samuel Elbert,
- George W. Reed,
- John Trippe,
- Arthur Sinclair,
- H. J. Need [*Reed*],
- Sybrant Vanschaick,
- Charles Gadsden,[1]
- James T. Leonard,
- Samuel Angus,
- William Burrows,
- John Shattuck,
- John Rowe,
- William P. Smith,
- Edward Bennett,
- Octavius A. Page,
- L. Warrington,
- J. Blakeley,
- Thomas Macdonough,
- Winlock Clarke,
- James Biddle,
- Jos. J. Maxwell,
- Edward N. Cox,
- Oliver H. Perry,
- Jos. Bainbridge,
- Robert Henley,
- J. M. Gardner,
- William Crane,
- Robert Stewart,
- S. G. Blodget,
- Benjamin F. Read,
- James Gibbon,
- Daniel S. Dexter,
- M. T. Woolsey,
- T. O. Anderson,
- Thomas Hunt,
- Jonathan Thorn,
- William H. Allen,
- Edward Trenchard,
- Sloss H. Grenell,
- John B. Nicholson,
- Archibald K. Kearney
- Robert T. Spence,
- Charles Morris, Jr.

Charles L. Ridgeley,
J. S. Higinbotham.
Stephen Cassin,
J. Orde Creighton.

ACTING LIEUTENANTS.

Francis Patton,
George Merrill,
James Renshaw.
Charles Robinson,
J. M. Haswell,
Benjamin Turner,
Alexander Laws,
William Ballard,
William Lewis.

MIDSHIPMEN.

(The following officers, from Walter Winter to J. Downs, hold older warrants than Wm. Lewis, an acting lieutenant, but owing to circumstances, have not yet been appointed, though equally entitled to promotion.)

Walter Winter,
George H. Geddes,
Charles Read,
William Butler,
William Duncanson,
Alfred Hazard,
George Mitchell,
William M'Intosh,
Sidney Smith,
William Miller,
Walter Boyd,
John Davis,
Bernard Henry,
George Mann,
Simon Smith,
Thomas Brown,
S. Woodhouse,
William S. Butler,
Richard B. Jones,
James Roach,
J. R. Leaycraft,
Jos. Nicholson,
Andrew Stuart,
Jacquelin Harvie,
John Lyon,
Henry Thomas,
Alexander S. Dexter,
Thomas Shields,
Overton Carr, Jr.
George H. Hannah,
Walter Stewart,
A. S. Wadsworth,
Thomas Swearingen,
Jacob Hite,
William Walker,
Eli E. Danielson,
John Stockton, Jr.
Alfred Coale,
Charles W. Rivers,
James A. Miller,
Jesse D. Elliott,
St. Clair Elliott,
James Wilson,
John H. Coats,
William R. Woodyear,
George W. Rodgers,
George C. Read,
Robert Spedden,
Jos. J. Nicholson,
Charles Walsh,
Henry Ballard,
Thomas Gamble,
Benedict J. Neale,
John B. Henry,
John Wright,
A. B. Lindsley,
John Kerr,
Gervas Clifton,
William Carter, Jr.
James M'Glauton,
Turner M'Glauton,
J. R. Maddison,
Jesse Keene,
Richard Smith,
J. B. Cheshire,
Wolcott Chauncey,
Edward D. Nicholson,
Thomas Doyle,
George R. Rice,
Jacob Felter,
William L. Travis,
Gustavus Douglass,
Edward H. Stewart,
Jesse Wilkinson,
Joshua Watson,
Leslie Mitchell,
Anthony Y. Denton,
John H. Elton,
John Fendall,
John Homer More,
William P. Adams,
J. B. Nicholson,
S. Renshaw,
William Peters,
B. V. Hoffman,

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William Sim,
Louis Alexis,
John Downes,
Cs. C. B. Thompson,
James P. Wilmer,
F. C. De Krafft,
F. J. Mitchell,
Lawrence Keene,
W. G. Anderson,
Lewis Hunt,
Pascal P. Peck,
James Marshall,
J. R. Sherwood,
John Nevitt,
J. Pettigrew,
Daniel P. Ramsey,
Charles Jones,
Thomas Magruder,
William Goodwin, 3rd,
Benjamin R. Saunders,
Hamlet Neale,
Henry H. Ranten,
W. E. Cheeseborough,
Alexander Brent,
James P. Webb,
D. Chalmers,
Gustavus Brown,
Benjamin Mathews,
Fox H. Sturman,
Horace S. Sprigg,
Fitz Henry Babbit,
Augustus C. Ludlow,
William E. Hill,
Rt. S. Steel,
Peter Pinny
William D. Chamberlayne,
John Marshall
William Wright,
Horace Walpole,
T. W. Warrell,
W. C. Beard,
Seth Stodder,
T. D. Chamberlayne,
Alexander James Dallas, Jr.
T. Ap Catesby Jones,
George Budd,
Charles A. Budd,
Edmund P. Kennedy.

B.

AN ACT supplementary to the act, entitled "An act in addition to the act, entitled 'An act providing for a Naval Peace Establishment, and for other purposes."

Be it enacted, &c. That, from and after the passage of this act, the act, entitled "An act providing for a Naval Peace Establishment, and for other purposes," be, and the same is hereby repealed, excepting and reserving the third section thereof, which regulates the ration of the navy of the United States.

Sec. 2. *And be it further enacted,* That there shall be retained in the naval service in times of peace, and that the Naval Peace Establishment shall consist of the following officers, that is to say, fifteen Captains, nine Masters Commandant, one hundred Lieutenants, one hundred and fifty Midshipmen, and as many Surgeons, Sailingmasters, Surgeons' Mates, Chaplains, Pursers, Boatswains, Gunners, Sailmakers, and Carpenters, as may, in the discretion of the President of the United States, be deemed expedient and necessary.

Sec. 3. *And be it further enacted,* That the President of the United States be, and he is hereby, authorized, in his discretion, to keep in actual service in the navy, in time of peace, not exceeding–

Able seamen,	400
Ordinary seamen, &c.	400
Boys,	114

C.

Exhibit of the proportion of Able Seamen, Ordinary Seamen, and Boys, required for vessels of the description mentioned underneath.

	Able Seamen.	Ordinary Seamen.	Boys.
For a frigate of forty-four guns, ...	120	142	30
For a frigate of thirty-six guns, ...	100	107	30
For a frigate of thirty-two guns, ...	75	65	25
For a vessel of sixteen guns,*	45	30	10
For a schooner of fourteen guns, ...	30	15	8
	370	359	103
	359		
	103		
	832		

*For such a vessel as the brig *Hornet*, which rates sixteen guns, we should require sixty able seamen, forty ordinary seamen, and twenty boys.

D.

List of the Navy of the United States, showing the number of guns and station.

	Guns each.	Where employed.
FRIGATES.		
United States, ...	44	Eastern Branch, in ordinary.
Constitution, ...	44	Mediterranean.
President, ...	44	Eastern Branch, in ordinary.
Chesapeake,[2]	44	" " " "
Constellation	36	Eastern Branch, dismantling.
Congress, ...	36	" " " "
New York, ...	36	Eastern Branch, in ordinary.
Boston, ...	32	" " " "
Essex, ...	32	Mediterranean.
Adams, ...	32	Off the coast.
John Adams, ...	32	Eastern Branch, dismantling.
BRIGS.		
Syren, ...	16	Mediterranean.

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Argus, ...	16	Ditto.
Hornet, ...	16	Eastern Branch; ordered off the coast.
Vixen, ...	14	Mediterranean.
Wasp, ...	—	Building at Navy Yard, Washington.
SCHOONERS.		
Enterprise, ...	14	Mediterranean.
Nautilus, ...	12	Ditto.
BRIG-KETCHES.		
Spitfire, 1 thirteen inch mortar and 2 long nine pounders, ...	—	Mediterranean.
Vengeance, 1 thirteen inch mortar and 2 long nine pounders, .	—	Ditto.
One building at		Portland.
Ditto at	—	Newburyport.

Gunboats, carrying a thirty-two pounder in bow and stern.

No. 1, off the Coast,
No. 2, Mediterranean,
No. 3, Ditto,
No. 4, Ditto,
No. 5, Ditto,
No. 6, Ditto,
No. 7, supposed to be lost,
No. 8, Mediterranean,
No. 9, Ditto,
No. 10, Ditto,
No. 11, Portland; ready for launching,
No. 12, Newburyport; ready for launching.

Eight in the Western country, building, two of which are probably launched by this time; the others nearly ready for launching.

NAVY DEPARTMENT, *December* 5, 1805.

ASP, Naval Affairs, I: 152-54.

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1. Christopher Gadsden, Jr.

2. The ships listed in this document appear with the number of guns which they were officially rated to carry, not the number of guns they actually carried. The frigates *United States*, *Constitution*, and *President* were rated at 44 guns but carried approximately 56 guns. *Congress*, and *New York* were built as 36-gun frigates. *Chesapeake* was built at Gosport with the scantling of a small 44-gun ship but carried fewer guns and is frequently referred to as a 36- or 38-gun frigate.

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY SMITH TO NATHANIEL MACON, SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

"ESTIMATE OF THE ANNUAL EXPENSE OF SUPPORTING, IN ACTUAL SERVICE, THE WHOLE NAVAL FORCE.

COMMUNICATED TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, JANUARY 28, 1806."

NAVY DEPARTMENT, *January* 27, 1806.

SIR:

In obedience to the resolution of the House of Representatives, of the 24th instant,* I have the honor to enclose, for their information, paper A, which is an estimate of the annual expense of supporting in actual service the whole of the frigates and smaller vessels, now belonging to the navy of the United States. I have the honor to be [&c.]

R. SMITH.

N. MACON, Esq. *Speaker of the House of Representatives.*

**Resolved,* That the Secretary of the Navy be directed to lay before this House estimates of the expense of repairing, and of the annual expense of manning and supporting, in actual service, the whole of the frigates and smaller vessels of war belonging to the United States.

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A.

Estimate of the annual expense of supporting in actual service the whole of the frigates and smaller vessels now belonging to the Navy of the United States.

Names of Vessels.		For pay and subsistence of the officers and pay of the seamen.	For Provisions.	For medicine, hospital stores &c.	Repairs and contingent expenses.	Total amount.
Frigate	*President*, ...	$52,561 00	31,653 25	1,000 00	30,000 00	115,214 25
"	*United States*, . .	50,965 00	31,653 25	1,000 00	30,000 00	113,618 25
"	*Constitution*, . . .	50,965 00	31,653 25	1,000 00	30,000 00	113,618 25
"	*Chesapeake*, . . .	50,965 00	31,653 25	1,000 00	30,000 00	113,618 25
"	*Constellation*, . .	44,293 00	26,959 76	1,000 00	30,000 00	102,252 76
"	*Congress*, ...	44,293 00	26,959 76	1,000 00	30,000 00	102,252 76
"	*New York*, ...	44,293 00	26,959 76	1,000 00	30,000 00	102,252 76
"	*Essex*, ...	35,173 00	20,633 86	800 00	25,000 00	81,606 86
"	*Adams*, ...	35,173 00	20,633 86	800 00	25,000 00	81,606 86
"	*John Adams*, . . .	35,173 00	20,633 86	800 00	25,000 00	81,606 86
"	*Boston*, ...	35,173 00	20,633 86	800 00	25,000 00	81,606 86
Brig	*Syren*, ...	19,746 00	9,534 20	600 00	12,000 00	41,880 20
"	*Hornet*, ...	19,746 00	9,534 20	600 00	12,000 00	41,880 20
"	*Argus*, ...	19,746 00	9,534 20	600 00	12,000 00	41,880 20

" *Vixen*, ...	15,939 00	7,171 13	500 00	8,000 00	31,610 13
Schr *Nautilus*, ...	15,939 00	7,171 13	500 00	8,000 00	31,610 13
" *Enterprise*, ...	15,939 00	7,171 13	500 00	8,000 00	31,610 13
Gunboat *No. 1*, ...	6,441 00	3,648 46	200 00	750 00	11,039 46
Gunboats *No. 2* to *10*, inclusive, ...	57,969 00	32,836 14	1,800 00	6,750 00	99,355 14
Two Bombs, ...	12,882 00	7,296 92	400 00	1,500 00	22,078 92
Dollars,	663,374 00	383,925 23	15,900 00	379,000 00	1,442,199 23

N.B.-The expense of marines not included, excepting in the item of provisions.

ASP, Naval Affairs, I: 147-48.

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Thomas Jefferson's Gunboat Navy

One of the most remarkable naval documents in American history was produced by the pen of the third president, Thomas Jefferson. Jefferson has been rightly placed in the pantheon of the "American Enlightenment," as an accomplished architect, inventor, statesman, and diplomat. But there were occasionally topics he took to hand and studied that he never mastered, and one of these was naval affairs. During the 1780s and 1790s, when he was governor of Virginia and ambassador to France, he had contemplated naval matters and made statements supporting a navy which could protect his country's trade in foreign seas. But with his rise to the presidency, these thoughts vanished.

During his first term, Jefferson had to lead the nation through its second naval war and contend with other major problems in ways that jarred his essential vision of America as an isolated agrarian democracy. The purchase of the Louisiana Territory from France was certainly one of these undertakings. After the Tripolitan War, Jefferson cast about for a means of resolving the struggle between those who wanted to maintain and increase the size of the existing navy and those who saw no further need for a navy.

The president soon seized upon the idea that a navy comprised predominantly of gunboats would provide the solution of this conflict. There were, in fact, many good arguments in favor of adding a number of gunboats to the U.S. Navy's fleet of frigates, brigs, schooners, and sloops. Gunboats had served well in shallow water estuaries, bays, and lakes during the Revolution. They had been very useful in augmenting our fleet in the Mediterranean. But Jefferson's arguments went further still and sounded convincing to the landsmen in his circle. In the view of many naval officers at that time, the gunboats could not be considered as effective substitutes for deep-draft, heavily constructed warships.[1] *The president's message, however, gathered adherents and became official policy.*[2] *Approximately 176 gunboats were eventually built at a total cost of $1,500,000, a sum which could have been used to construct eight to ten frigates or five 74-gun ships of the line.*[3]

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1. Gunboats varied greatly in design and sail plan. Basically, their dimensions ranged as follows: keel 50–70 feet, beam 16–20 feet, depth in the hold 6 feet. Their armament consisted of a 24 or 32-pound gun mounted in the bow or on a pivot and two 12-pound carronades, one on each side. Under sail, the guns had to be stowed in the hold for seaworthiness. When mounted and in use, their recoil was such that the vessels rolled excessively. For comments on designs, see

Howard I. Chapelle, The History of the American Sailing Navy *(New York, 1949), pp. 179-241.*

2. *Congress authorized the construction of 50 additional gunboats by the Act of 21 Apr. 1806; 188 more were authorized on 18 Dec. 1807.*

3. *Dudley W. Knox,* History of the United States Navy *(New York, 1936), p. 77.*

PRESIDENT JEFFERSON'S MESSAGE TO CONGRESS

"To the Senate & House of Representatives of the United States."

In compliance with the request of the House of Representatives, expressed in their resolution of the 5th inst, I proceed to give such information, as is possessed, of the effect of Gunboats in the protection & defence of harbours, of the numbers thought necessary, & of the proposed distribution of them among the Ports & Harbours of the United States.

Under present circumstances, & governed by the intentions of the Legislature, as manifested by their annual appropriations of money for the purposes of defence, it has been concluded to combine, 1. land: batteries, furnished with heavy cannon & mortars, & established on all the points around the place favorable for preventing Vessels from lying before it: 2. moveable Artillery, which may be carried, as occasion may require, to points unprovided with fixed batteries: 3. floating batteries: & 4. Gunboats, which may oppose an enemy at his entrance, & cooperate with the batteries for his expulsion.

On this subject, professional men were consulted, as far as we had Opportunity. Genl Wilkinson, & the late Genl Gates gave their Opinions in writing, in favour of the system, as will be seen by their letters now communicated. The higher Officers of the Navy gave the same Opinions, in separate conferences, as their presence at the seat of Government offered occasions of consulting them: and no difference of judgment appeared on the subject. Those of Commodore Barron, & Capt Tingey, now here, are recently furnished in writing; & transmitted herewith to the Legislature.

The efficacy of Gunboats for the defence of Harbours, and of other smooth & inclosed waters, may be estimated in part from that of Gallies, formerly much used, but less powerful, more costly in their construction & maintenance, & requiring more men. But the Gunboat itself is believed to be in use with every modern maritime Nation, for the purposes of defence. In the Mediterranean, on which are several small powers, whose system, like ours, is peace & defence, few Har-

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bours are with out this article of protection. Our own experience there, of the effect of Gunboats for Harbour service, is recent. Algiers is particularly known to have owed, to a great provision of these Vessels the safety of it's City, since the epoch of their Construction. before that it had been repeatedly insulted & injured. the effect of Gunboats at present in the neighborhood of Gibraltar is well known; & how much they were used, both in the attack, & defence of that place, during a former war. the extensive resort to them by the two greatest naval powers in the world, on an enterprize of invasion, not long since in prospect, shews their confidence in their efficacy, for the purposes for which they are suited. By the northern powers of Europe, whose seas are particularly adapted to them, they are still more used. the remarkable action between the Russian flotilla of Gunboats & Gallies, and a Turkish fleet of Ships of the line & Frigates, in the Liman Sea, in 1788, will be readily recollected. the latter, commanded by their most celebrated admiral, were compleatly defeated, & several of their Ships of the line destroyed.

From the opinions given, as to the number of Gunboats necessary for some of the principal sea ports, & from a view of all the Towns & Ports, from Orleans to Maine inclusive, intitled to protection in proportion to their situation & circumstances, it is concluded that, to give them a due measure of protection in times of war, about 200 Gunboats will be requisite. According to first ideas, the following would be their general distribution; liable to be varied, on more mature examination, and as circumstances shall vary. that is to say

To the Missisipi & it's neighboring waters 40 Gunboats.

To Savanna & Charleston, & the Harbours on each side, from Saint Mary's to Curratuck-25.

To the Chesapeake & it's waters. 20.

To Delaware Bay & River 15.

To New York, the Sound, & waters as far as Cape Cod. 50.

To Boston & the Harbours north of Cape Cod 50.

the flotillas assigned to these several stations, might each be under the care of a particular Commandant, & the vessels composing them would, in ordinary, be distributed among the Harbours within the Station, in proportion to their importance.

Of these boats, a proper proportion would be of a larger size, such as those heretofore built, capable of navigating any seas, & of reinforcing occasionally the strength of even the most distant Port, when menaced with danger. the residue would be confined to their own, or the neighboring Harbours, would be smaller, less furnished for accommodation, & consequently less costly. Of the number supposed necessary, 73 are built or building, & the 127 still to be provided would cost from five to Six hundred thousand Dollars. having regard to the convenience of the treasury, as well as to the resources for building, it has been thought that one half of these might be built in the present year, & the other half the next. With the Legislature however it will rest, to stop where we are, or at any further point, when they shall be of opinion that the number provided shall be sufficient for the object.

At times, when Europe, as well as the United States, shall be at peace, it would not be proposed that more than six or eight of these vessels should be kept afloat. When Europe is in war, treble that number might be necessary, to be distributed among those particular Harbours which foreign Vessels of war are in the habit of frequenting, for the purpose of preserving order therein. but they would be manned, in ordinary, with only their complement for navigation, relying on the Seamen, & militia of the Port, if called into action on any sudden emergency. it would be only when the United States should themselves be at war, that the whole number would be brought into active Service, & would be ready, in the first moments of the war, to cooperate with the other means, for covering at once the line of our Sea ports. At all times, those unemployed, would be withdrawn into places not exposed to sudden enterprize, hauled up under Sheds, from the sun and weather, & kept in preservation with little expense for repairs or maintenance.

It must be superfluous to observe, that this species of naval armament is proposed merely for defensive Operation: that it can have but little effect towards protecting our commerce in the Open seas, even on our own coast; & still less can it become an excitement to engage in offensive maritime war, towards which it would furnish no means.

Th: Jefferson
Feb. 10. 1807.

DS, DNA, RG46, RS, 9th Congress, Messages of the President (SEN 9A–E2).

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Anglo-American Tensions: The Neutral Trade

The major readjustment necessary for American trade in the years after the Revolution was to find new markets. Although the United States continued to ship products to Britain, such as tobacco, cotton, rice, indigo, wheat, and naval stores, American imports no longer received preferential treatment. The British attempted to restrict American trade with the West Indies, though unsuccessfully, in the post-revolutionary years. American shippers began to compensate for the loss of British markets with the opening of the China trade and through direct trade with continental Europe.

The United States became the world's major neutral trading nation during the Napoleonic Wars. This fact was keenly felt by many British observers. Exports from the United States averaged $20 million annually from 1790 to 1792. Thereafter the trend was sharply upward, reaching $94 million in 1801 and rising to a new high of $108 million in 1807. Imports followed the same trend, rising from $23 million in 1790 to $110 million in 1801. After a brief contraction, they surged again to a new high of $138.5 million in 1807.

Without doubt, Great Britain benefitted from American trade. After the Peace of Amiens (1802) brought a temporary lull to hostilities in Europe, Britain purchased twice the value of American goods shipped to France, and after the war resumed, Britain's proportion rose even higher. The renewal of war in Europe in 1803 raised British awareness of American shipping practices. Essayists such as Lord Sheffield whose views on these matters had been well-known for years, and James Stephens, author of War in Disguise: Or the Frauds of Neutral Flags *(London, 1805), helped to stir the cauldron. A tougher attitude on the part of the British government toward reexportation was seen in the* Essex *decision in the British High Court of Admiralty in May 1805. American shipowners had fallen into the practice of carrying goods from Spain or France to a port in the United States. The goods would be off-loaded, inspected by customs, and then reloaded, sometimes along with additional goods. The ship's master paid the duty assessed but then much of that fee was refunded to him in what was called a "drawback." Then ship and cargo departed for the colonies where they would change these goods for others and the whole process would begin over again. Americans maintained that these voyages were separate or "broken," while the British until 1805 had more or less agreed to go* *along with the charade of off-loading, payment of duties, and reloading of ships that this elaborate process required. In fact, the Americans were violating the "Rule of the War of 1756" in these procedures.*[1] *To read the reasoning of the Judges of Admiralty is to see how the British came to look upon this practice; the decision clarified how such cases would be treated in the future. Royal Navy captains were instructed to make seizures when they intercepted ships whose papers indicated such practices were in operation. The* Essex *decision ushered in a period of increased difficulties for American shipowners and masters. From 1803 until the issuance of the Royal Orders in Council of 1807, the British seized 528 American flag ships while France seized 206 from 1803 until the issuance of the Berlin Decress of 1806 which declared the British Isles to be under a blockade.*[2]

British nationalists objected to the degree that American shipping was taking over trade formerly carried in their ships, particularly in the reexport trade. According to British maritime policy, followed since the Seven Years War (or "French and Indian War," 1756–1763), neutral countries were not to be permitted to trade in wartime with countries they did not ordinarily trade with in times of peace. Occasionally, however, licenses were granted as exceptions to this rule. Lord Sheffield's 1806 essay sounded the tocsin, seeing America's prosperity as a result of Britain's relaxation of her navigation laws. A representative portion of his writing has been selected to throw additional light on the British attitudes toward the Essex *decision.*

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[1] *Herbert W. Briggs,* The Doctrine of Continuous Voyage *(Baltimore, 1926), pp. 11–40.*

[2] *Bradford Perkins,* Prologue to War: England and the United States, 1805–1812 *(Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1963), p. 72.*

THE *ESSEX* CASE, 1805

"Copy"

Sentence of the Vice-Admiralty Court of Nassau,
New Providence in the case of the Brig *Essex*,
Joseph Orne Master

This is the case of an American vessel, wholly laden with goods the produce of Spain, bound to a Spanish colony, having previously called in at a port on the continent of America, where the cargo was unladen, and there almost immediately after re-shipped: it is contended, on the part of the claimant, and that this act of landing the cargo, has worked so total a change on the voyage, as to take it altogether from the opera-

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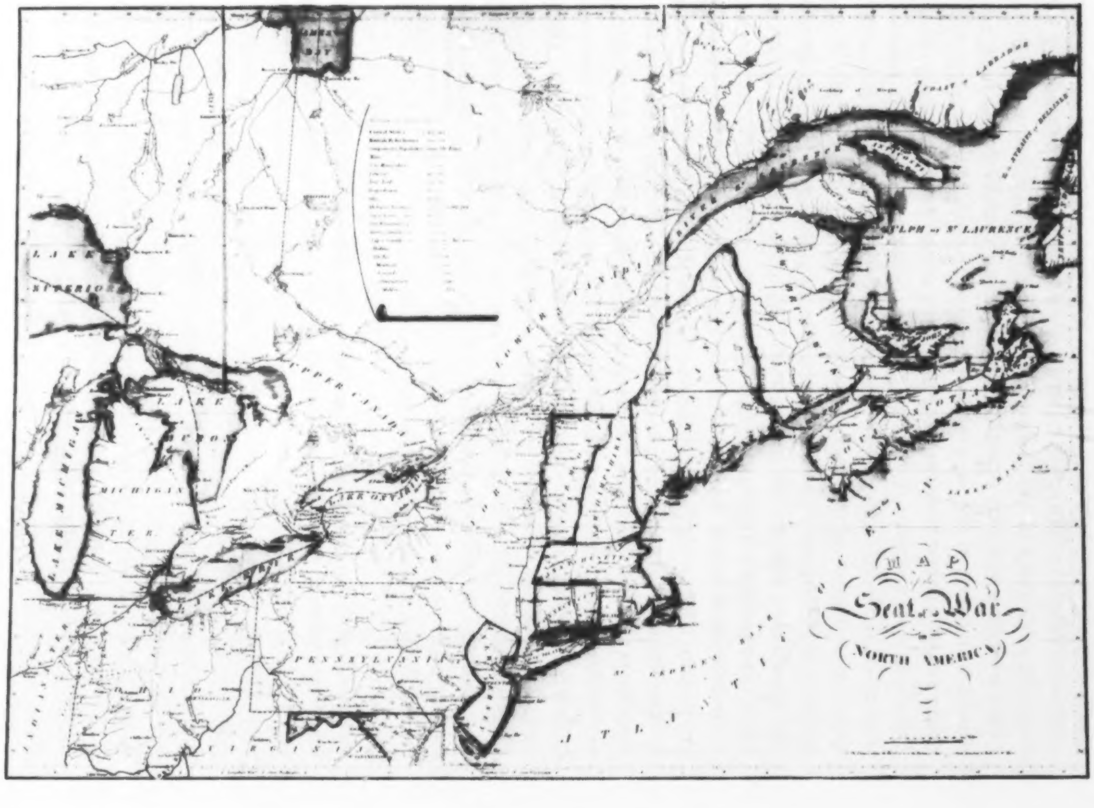
MAP of the Seat of War in NORTH AMERICA
LAKE SUPERIOR
LAKE MICHIGAN
LAKE HURON
MICHIGAN TER.
LAKE ERIE
LAKE ONTARIO
UPPER CANADA
LOWER CANADA
NEW YORK
PENNSYLVANIA
VIRGINIA
RIVER St. LAWRENCE
GULPH of St. LAWRENCE
NEW BRUNSWICK
NOVA SCOTIA
COAST of LABRADOR
STRAITS of BELLEISLE
ATLANTIC
St. GEORGES BANK

tion of those principles which the court had deemed its duty, in conformity to the old law, to make the rule of its decision, and to apply, until abrogated by more recent determinations, to all vessels sailing between Spain and its colonies.

The Goods, there cannot be the least doubt, were landed for the sole purpose of obviating or evading the danger to which, in a direct voyage, they would necessarily be exposed. Spanish produce on a voyage to America, or any other neutral nation, all the world Knows runs no risk; it is to be presumed that such imports are designed for her internal consumption. Whether neutrals can, consistently with the rights of belligerents, transport this produce from the neutral to the enemy's territory, even supposing a bonâ fide transfer to have taken place from the actual importer in that neutral state, is a question of very great magnitude, and one on which I should feel a repugnance to decide otherwise than this court has uniformly done, without being more particularly certified than I am at present of those authorities on which it would seem that another Vice-admiralty court has acted. In the case now before the court, this however is not the point of consideration, for it is not pretended that the cargo is other than than the identical one brought from Spain in this very vessel, nor that there has been any transfer of the property in America; in all its relations it is precisely as when it left Spain. It appears to me moreover perfectly clear and certain, that the intention was from the beginning to send this cargo to a Spanish colony, that this voyage (this second voyage as it has been so frequently termed in the documentary evidence, tho' it seems to me that the epithet of third voyage would be more consistent with the principles attempted to be laid down) did not originate in finding unexpectedly a bad market for the goods at Salem, nor in learning that there was a good one for them at Havanna. I am also as perfectly convinced that the cargo was not unladen for the purpose either of repairing the ship, or of trying to dispose of the goods at Salem, as the master would seem to insinuate. According then to my apprehension, this case resolves itself precisely into one of those, which the embarrassment of Spain, and the relative positions of the American States have rendered so common & frequent. The vessel has in fact touched in America solely to colour the true purpose; viewing then the asserted destination of this vessel to be falsified by the evidence, and that the voyage was in fact to the Havanna, touching at Salem,

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I cannot hesitate in denying to a fraudulently circuitous voyage, those immunities which are withheld from a direct one. — Without reference therefore to any other principle, I consider this as virtually a traffic between Spain and Cuba, and condemn the vessel and cargo accordingly. This decision renders it unnecessary to notice some parts of the evidence, which lead me to view Messrs Santa Maria y Cuesta as more concerned in this transaction than is acknowledged, and that this Mr Orne is deeply engaged in covering Spanish property, or to animadvert on a method I observed very generally obtaining of neutrals carrying on traffic by means of bills drawn in Spain, and payable at the Havanna, and vice versa; surely this procedure is merely an evasion and the middle man, the neutral, can be considered on every principle of the law in no other light than as an agent or broker. With respect to the master's adventure,[1] it goes so far beyond the proportions of matters of this nature, that I really must view it as part of the cargo. Exempting adventures is a mere matter of comity, and when masters attempt on the presumption to screen very large sums, and to exceed the common bounds of this indulgence, they must be considered as merchants, and their property made liable to the same consequences. I shall however acquit his reaping-hooks if they be simply, as he states them, instruments of husbandry, as I do the adventures of the mate and crew.

(Signed) John Kelsall,
Judge V.A.C. of N.P.

Confirmation of the foregoing Sentence by
the Lords Commissioners of Appeals.
"Copy"
Saturday the 22. day of June 1805. at the Council Chamber
Whitehall,
Present
Sir William Grant Knight, Master of the Rolls
Sir William Wynne Knight
Sir William Scott Knight
in the presence of Robert Jenner Notary Public, one of the
Deputy Registrars
Essex,
Joseph Orne Master } On admission of the further proof.

The Lords having maturely deliberated pronounced the further proof of the duties that were paid on the importation & exportation in America, and drawbacks if any received, and insurances on the voyage from Spain to America or on the voyage from America to the Havanna if any were made and of the certificates of the entries at the Custom House in America respecting the said Ship and cargo to be insufficient, and by interlocutory decree condemned the said Ship and cargo as good and lawful prize to Charles Underwood commander of the private Ship of war *Favourite*.

Copy, DNA, RG59, James Monroe #35, 18 Oct. 1805, Despatches from U.S. Ministers to Great Britain, Vol. XII. Endorsed: "Recd via Mr Monroe's No. 35."

1. Adventure: an enterprise involving financial risk. Ship owners customarily allowed members of the crew to carry small quantities of goods on their own account for sale at ports of call.

LORD SHEFFIELD'S STRICTURES

[Extract]

It is true, the policy of America has not been unwise; it affords a striking contrast to our weakness, and virtually reproaches us for our neglect of all sound and rational principles. Yet, if we be thus reminded that, at the very moment when we were renouncing to the Americans our carrying trade, they were active, by all possible restrictions, to exclude us from theirs; we should also recollect, and be instructed by the recollection, that our liberality was but that of the prodigal who gives without return, and who enriches others to impoverish himself.

. . . it was in this very period of ten years that our carrying trade with America most rapidly declined; that our tonnage employed in that trade fell, according to the American account, from 72,000 to 14,000; that the suspension of our Navigation Laws operated principally in favour of the United States; that we even opened to them a free trade with the British Settlements in the East; and that we *anticipated* their expectations on the subject of "the abolition of the duties, permitted under the treaty of 1794."[1] Shall it, then, any longer be said, that Britain has not cherished this thriving branch of American prosperity at the expence of her own welfare.

I do not mean to decry the policy of America; it is the natural policy of nations. I do not mean to lament her prosperity; it is a prosperity at

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which she has a right to aim. But I am not, therefore, willing to shrink from exposing the weakness of sacrificing to that prosperity, from any affected or false notion of liberality or conciliation, the laws, the rights, and the welfare of Britain. . . .

It appears, however, from various publications in America, of a recent date . . . [that] While the reiterated aggressions of France and Spain seem to be palliated or forgotten, the whole indignation of the country is endeavoured to be collected and turned against Great Britain; and according to the *vigorous* politicians who thus act and think, England is to be immediately, both commercially and politically, humiliated, by restrictions, embargoes and *sequestrations*,[2] to be decreed by the American States. . . .

An act of sequestration would be a measure far more hazardous and injurious to America. . . . It can hardly be supposed that Great Britain, if so compelled, would not employ her whole power of reaction and retaliation. In such a case, what would become of the American vessels in the English ports, of which there must be at all times a considerable number? What would become of those commercial facilities and profits, derived from British capital, credit, and demand? . . .

But there is a great difference between hostile language and hostile measures; and it will be recollected that, if any war would be injurious to America, a war with England would be peculiarly disastrous. The maritime power of that country would not be of much avail in such a contest. I should imagine, however, save only as nations, as well as individuals, are subject to fits of wrongheadedness, which is, sometimes, termed enthusiasm, and relative to which there can be no calculation, that America will scarcely deem it expedient to commence such a war, merely because England thinks it proper to maintain her best and most necessary institutions and laws. The Americans are a sensible people, not easy to be diverted from considerations of their own interests. And it will be seen that the interior of their country not only cannot be benefited, but must suffer by hostility with England; and that the mischief which they could do to our commerce, by privateers manned by renegadoes from this country, would afford no compensation for the risk of every vessel that went to sea, for the utter derangement of their trade, and for the consequent embarrassment and distress of their maritime towns, in which, is centred the greater part of their population, power, and wealth. . . .

Lord Sheffield [John Baker Holroyd], *Strictures on the Necessity of Inviolably Maintaining the Navigation and Colonial System of Great Britain* (London, 1806), pp. 34, 35-37, 199, 201, 202-203.

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[1] Known as "Jay's Treaty" in the United States. Although it was bitterly attacked in the process of ratification, it was approved by the Senate and preserved amicable relations with Great Britain for a decade. See Samuel F. Bemis, *Jay's Treaty: A Study in Commerce and Diplomacy* (New York, 1924), for the classic account. Jerald A. Combs, *The Jay Treaty: Political Battleground of the Founding Fathers* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1970), is the most recent study in depth.

[2] Emphasized words, indicated by italics, are in all cases Sheffield's own.

The Anglo-French Commercial War

American planters, merchants, shipowners, masters, and seamen who earned their living through the production, sale, purchase, and transport of commodities across the Atlantic were caught between the millstones of Great Britain and France as they waged desperate economic warfare during the years after 1803. The Royal Navy energetically enforced the Essex *decision, causing an increase in the number of ships seized for infringements of the "continuous voyage" rule. This angered congressmen who searched for ways to respond to British arrogance on the high seas.*

In April 1806, the United States Senate passed a "Non-Importation Act" which was to become effective in November. Its aim was to exert economic pressure upon England by prohibiting the import of select items produced there which the United States could obtain elsewhere or by production at home. Speeches in favor of this law made increasing mention of the Royal Navy's impressment of seamen from American ships. President Jefferson signed this law, showing his preference for peaceful coercion rather than warlike measures.

Disturbed by the deterioration in relations with Great Britain, the president charged James Monroe, minister to Great Britain, and William Pinkney, who was to replace Monroe, with the task of negotiating a new treaty between the two nations. Jefferson's instructions established three conditions to render such a treaty acceptable. The British would have to renounce impressment, soften their position on neutral trade, and give indemnities for captures made under the Essex *decision.*

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American hopes were greatly disappointed. Foreign Secretary Charles James Fox, known to be favorable to such a new understanding, was stricken with a fatal illness, and there was considerable domestic opposition in Britain toward any conciliatory move by the cabinet. Despite the Royal Navy's victory at Trafalgar in 1805, the European war seemed to be going badly for England. The deaths of Lord Nelson in 1805 and of William Pitt and Foreign Secretary Fox in 1806 had darkened the public mood. The Americans seemed to ask too much, and the Admiralty was adamantly opposed to concessions. As a result, the Monroe-Pinkney Treaty was negotiated and signed without fulfilling Jefferson's conditions.[1] *After studying the document, Jefferson refused to submit it to the Senate.*

Commercial warfare between Britain and France grew harsher during 1806. The British Government had declared a partial blockade of the north European ports. Napoleon's rejoinder was issuance of the Berlin Decree in November which declared England to be under blockade and prohibited ships carrying British goods from entering continental ports. The British reaction to this was to reply in kind, turning the screw sharply in the opposite direction to jeopardize direct trade between France and her allies. This act is contained in the document which follows, an Order in Council, issued by the King's Council on 7 January 1807.

"AT THE COURT AT THE QUEEN'S PALACE, THE 7TH OF JANUARY 1807. PRESENT, THE KING'S MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY IN COUNCIL."

WHEREAS the French Government has issued certain orders, which in violation of the usages of war, purport to prohibit the commerce of All Neutral Nations with His Majesty's Dominions, and also to prevent such Nations from Trading with any other Country in any articles the Growth, produce or Manufacture of His Majesty's Dominions.

AND WHEREAS the said Government has also taken upon itself, to declare All His Majesty's Dominions, to be in a State of Blockade, at a Time when the Fleets of France and her Allies, are themselves confined within their own ports by the Superior Valour and Discipline of the British Navy.

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[1] *For discussion of the negotiation of the Monroe-Pinkney Treaty, see Irving Brant,* James Madison, Secretary of State *(Indianapolis, 1953), pp. 366-73, and Charles E. Hill, "James Madison," in Samuel F. Bemis, ed.,* The American Secretaries of State and Their Diplomacy, *10 vols. (New York, 1928, reprint ed., 1958), III: 112-20.*

And Whereas such Attempts on the part of the Enemy, would give to His Majesty an unquestionable Right of retalliation, and would warrant His Majesty in enforcing the same prohibition of all Commerce with France, which that power vainly hopes to effect against the Commerce of His Majesty's Subjects, a prohibition which the Superiority of His Majesty's Naval Forces, might enable him to support, by actually investing the ports and Coasts of the Enemy, with numerous Squadrons and Cruizers, so as to make the Entrance or approach thereto manifestly dangerous.

And Whereas His Majesty, though unwilling to follow the Example of His Enemies, by proceeding to an Extremity so distressing to all nations not engaged in the War, and carrying on their accustomed Trade, yet feels himself bound by a due regard to the just defence of the Rights and Interests of His People, not to suffer such measures to be taken by the Enemy, without taking some Steps on His part to restrain this Violence, and to re[tort] upon them the Evils of their own Injustice.

His Majesty is therefore pleased by and with the Advice of his Privy Council to Order, And it is hereby Ordered, That no Vessel shall be permitted to Trade from one port to another, both which ports shall belong to, or be in the possession of France, or her Allies, or shall be so far under Their Controul, as that British vessels may not freely trade thereat: And the Commanders of His Majesty's Ships of War and privateers shall be, and are hereby Instructed to warn every Neutral vessel, coming from any such port and destined to another such port, to discontinue her Voyage, and not to proceed to any such port: And any vessel after being so warned, or any vessel coming from any such port, after a reasonable Time shall have been afforded for receiving information of This His Majesty's Order, which shall be found proceeding to another such port, shall be captured and brought in, and, together with her Cargo, shall be Condemned as a lawful prize: And His Majesty's principal Secretaries of State, The Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, and the Judges of the High Court of Admiralty, and Courts of Vice Admiralty, are to take the necessary measures herein, as to Them shall respectively appertain.

W. Fawkener

DS, UkLPR, Adm. 1/5204. Remains of wax seal at top left. Note at bottom of second page: "10 Janr. Orders Accordy. Copy of this (to save time) to be in readiness for sending this evening."

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The *Chesapeake–Leopard* Affair

During June 1807, several British frigates kept a vigil off the Virginia Capes. They planned to intercept two French warships that had sought refuge in Chesapeake Bay off Annapolis. When their frigates needed provisions, the British customarily put in at Hampton Roads while officers and crew went ashore in Norfolk. During one of these visits, H.M.S. Melampus *suffered the desertion of several crewmen who signed on various American ships lying at anchor, including the 38-gun frigate* Chesapeake. *The British commander complained, but American authorities refused to assist in the return of these sailors.*

Navy Secretary Smith had ordered Commodore James Barron to sail in Chesapeake *to take command of the U.S. Mediterranean squadron. Barron visited his flagship only twice prior to her departure, leaving all details to Master Commandant Charles Gordon, who was to act as captain under Barron.* Chesapeake *weighed anchor at 6 A.M. on 22 June and headed for sea, passing two British frigates at anchor in Lynnhaven Roads. By mid-afternoon,* Chesapeake *was some fifteen miles southeast of Cape Henry when another British frigate,* Leopard, *overtook her. The ships spoke, and* Leopard *sent over an officer with a message for Barron.*

The British captain, Salusbury Humphreys, transmitted an order he had received from his superior, Vice Admiral Sir George Berkeley, to the effect that he was under orders to halt Chesapeake *and search her for any deserters that might be on board. Barron denied such men had been recruited and refused to have his men mustered by any officers but his own. With this, the parley having lasted 45 minutes, the British officer returned to his ship. Within minutes and without specific warning,* Leopard *ranged alongside* Chesapeake *and fired a broadside. The astonished Barron attempted to hail and sent his men to quarters silently, without the usual drumbeat. There was much confusion for the ship was not yet secured for sea and the crew was not familiar with their quarters assignments. Powder horns remained to be filled, matches were unlit, and some cannon did not fit in their carriages.* Leopard *continued to fire for ten minutes, until Barron struck his colors.*

Humphreys sent over a boarding party who proceeded to muster Chesapeake*'s crew. They identified four men as deserters and took them off. When Commodore Barron offered his ship as a prize of war, Humphreys declined, regretting any loss of life and offering assistance.* Chesapeake *returned to Hampton Roads with three feet of water in the* *hold, sixteen men wounded and three dead. When the news spread of how an American warship had been humiliated just off the coast, there arose a great outcry against Britain which spread to Washington and beyond. This was more of an insult than most could bear. Citizens of Norfolk rioted and broke the water casks of the entire British squadron.*

President Jefferson's reaction was cool and measured. He chose first to request a formal explanation from the British government which would take months to communicate. Meanwhile the public's ardor subsided. Jefferson pressed Congress to increase economic pressures on Britain. In July, he formally expelled British warships from American waters, and in November, the president commented further on British behavior in an extended statement on foreign policy. These documents, combined with the log from the Chesapeake *on the day of the "action," present the details and ramifications of the most serious naval incident to have occurred between the United States and Britain in many years. Vivid memories of the event lingered in the minds of American naval officers, stinging them into a state of readiness should such an event recur.*[1]

Log of U.S. Frigate *Chesapeake*

[Extract]

A true Copy taken from the United States Frigate *Chesapeak*'s Log Book, James Barron Esqr Commander, Charles Gordon Esqr Captain, and Samuel Brook, Sailing Master

Monday June 22nd Commences with light Breezes from the Sd & Wd and clear Weather. At 7 A M hoisted out the Jolly Boat, and hoisted in the Second Cutter, run the Jolly Boat up a Stern, at 1/4 past 7-Weighed anchor made Sail with a pleasant Breeze from W.S.W. and stood out for Sea. at 9 pass'd 2 of H.B. Majesty's Ships at Anchor. Stow'd the larbourd Anchor and secured the Boats. at Meridian the light on Cape Henry bore S.W. by S. people employ'd in clearing Ship for Sea.

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[1] *The secretary of the navy convened a court of inquiry and a court martial on Commodore Barron and his principal subordinates. Barron was found guilty of one out of four charges for "neglecting on the probability of an engagement to clear his ship for action." He was suspended from all command in the navy, without pay or official emolument of any kind for five years dating from 8 Feb. 1808. Barron went to Europe and remained there during the War of 1812. The strong feeling held among officers on this incident resulted in many duels. Barron killed Commodore Decatur in the most infamous of these at Bladensburg, Md., in 1820.*

This Day ends at Meridian and contains 17 hours

Tuesday 23rd Commences with light Breezes from the South and West, and clear Weather. a Ship in sight apparently standing for us, at 1 P M. the Wind haul'd to the Nd & Ed. in Studding Sails and haul'd upon a Wind and at 1/2 past 3 the Ship came up with us. back'd the Main Top Sail and Spoke her. was boarded by her, She proved to be the British Ship *Leopard* of 50 Guns She came on board to demand some Men who had deserted from the English Navy. the Commodore refusing to give them up, the Boat return'd. they ranged along side of us and Commenc'd a heavy fire. We being unprepared and the Ship much lumber'd-it was impossible to Clear Ship for Action in proper time. though every possible exertion was made, and not suspecting an enemy so near did not begin to clear the Deck untill the enemy had commenc'd firing. In about thirty minutes after receiving much Damage in our Hull, Rigging and Spars, and having three Men killed. viz. Joseph Arnold, Peter Shakely and John Lawrence, and 16 Wounded. Vizt Commodore Barron, Mr. Broom, John Hadden, Cotton Brown, Peter Ellison, John Parker, Geo. Perseval, Peter Summers, Wm Hendrick, Robt McDonald, Francis Conhoven, Thomas Short, Wm Moody, David Creighton, John Martyr, James Epps, Emanuel Hendricks [*Manuel Fernandez*], John Wilson, William Warren and John Bates. And having one Gun ready fired and haul'd down our Colours. the *Leopard* ceased firing and sent her Boat on board. Muster'd the Ships Company. At Sun down, they left the Ship taking with them 4 Men. Vizt John Strawn [*Strachan*], Daniel Martin, Wm Ware and John Wilson, who had deserted from their Service. at the same time Lieut Allen went on board and returned at 8.o clock. The *Leopard* left us and Stood.

We then made Sail and stood in Shore having 3 feet Water in our Hold. Crew employ'd in pumping and Working Ship in for Hampton Roads, got the Anchors clear for coming too. At 6 A M took the 3rd reef in. The Main Topsail, and Set Top Gallant Sails. Held a Survey on the Masts & Rigging. At 8 Cape Henry bore S.W. Dist 4 or 5 Miles. Employ'd Ship in for Hampton Road. at 1/2 past Meridian came too with the Starboard Anchor in 7 fathom Water in Hampton Roads.

Copy. DNA. RG45. CL. 1807. Vol. 2. No. 26.

"By Thomas Jefferson President of the
U. S. of America
A Proclamation"

[July 2, 1807]

During the wars which, for some time, have unhappily prevailed among the powers of Europe; the United States of America, firm in their principles of peace, have endeavored by justice, by a regular discharge of all their National & Social duties, & by every friendly office their situation has admitted, to maintain, with all the belligerents, their accustomed relations of friendship, hospitality, & commercial intercourse. Taking no part in the questions which animate these powers against each other, nor permitting themselves to entertain a wish but for the restoration of general peace, they have observed with good faith the neutrality they assumed, & they believe that no instance of a departure from it's duties can be justly imputed to them by any nation. A free use of their Harbours & waters, the means of refitting & of refreshment, of succour to their sick & suffering, have, at all times, and on equal principles, been extended to all, & this too, amidst a constant recurrence of acts of insubordination to the laws, of violence to the persons, & of trespasses on the property of our citizens, committed by Officers of one of the belligerent parties received among us. in truth these abuses of the laws of hospitality have, with few exceptions, become habitual to the commanders of the British armed Vessels hovering on our coasts, & frequenting Our harbours. they have been the subject of repeated representations to their government. Assurances have been given that proper orders should restrain them within the limit of the rights and of the respect due to a friendly nation; but those orders & assurances have been without effect; no instance of punishment for past wrongs has taken place. ~~even the murder of a citizen~~, ~~peaceably pursuing his occupation within the limits of our own jurisdiction~~, ~~remains unpunished~~. at length a deed, transcending all we have hitherto seen or suffered, brings the public Sensibility to a Serious Crisis; & our forbearance to a necessary pause. A Frigate of the U.S. trusting to a state of peace, and leaving her Harbour on a distant service, has been surprised and attacked by a British Vessel of superior force, one of a squadron then lying in our waters & covering the transaction, & has been disabled from Service, with the loss of a number of men killed & wounded. This enormity was not only without provocation or justifiable cause, but was committed with the avowed purpose of taking by

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force from a ship of war of the United States a part of her crew. and that no circumstance might be wanting to mark its character, ~~the commander was apprised~~ it had been previously ascertained that the seamen thus forcebly seized, demanded were native Citizens of the U.S. having effected ~~his~~ her purpose, she returned to anchor with ~~his~~ her squadron within our jurisdiction. Hospitality under such circumstances ceases to be a duty: and a continuance of it, with such uncontroled abuses, would tend only, by multiplying injuries & irritations, to bring on a rupture between the two Nations. this extreme resort is equally opposed to the interests of both, as it is to assurances of the most friendly dispositions on the part of the British Government, in the midst of which this outrage has been committed. in this light the subject cannot but present itself, to that Government, & strengthen the motives to an honorable reparation of the wrong which has been done, & to that effectual controul of it's Naval Commanders, which alone can justify the Government of the U.S. in the exercise of those hospitalities it is now constrained to discontinue.

In consideration of these circumstances and of the right of every nation to regulate it's own police, to provide for it's peace & for the Safety of its Citizens, & consequently to refuse the admission of armed vessels into its Harbours or waters, either in such numbers, or of such descriptions, as are inconsistent with these, or with the maintenance of the authority of the laws. I have thought proper in pursuance of the authorities specially given by law to issue this my Proclamation, hereby requiring all armed vessels bearing commissions under the government of Great Britain, now within the Harbours or waters of the U. S. immediately & without any delay to depart from the same, & interdicting the entrance of all the said Harbours & waters to the said armed vessels, and to all others bearing commissions under the Authority of the British Government.

And if the said vessels, or any of them, shall fail to depart as aforesaid, or if they or any others, so interdicted shall hereafter enter the Harbors or waters aforesaid, I do in that case forbid all intercourse with them or any of them, their Officers or crews, & do prohibit all supplies & aid from being furnished to them or any of them.

And I do declare & make known that if any person from, or within the jurisdictional limits of the U.S. shall afford any Aid to any such vessel contrary to the prohibition contained in this Proclamation, either in repairing any such vessel, or, in furnishing her, her officers or crew, with supplies of any kind, or in any manner whatsoever, or if any Pilot shall assist in navigating any of the said armed vessels, unless it be for the purpose of carrying them in the first instance beyond the limits & jurisdiction of the U.S., or unless it be in the case of a vessel forced by distress, or charged with public dispatches as hereinafter provided for, such person or persons shall, on conviction suffer all the pains & penalties by the laws provided for such offences.

And I do hereby enjoin and require all persons bearing Office Civil or Military within or under the Authority of the U.S. and all others, Citizens or Inhabitants thereof, or being within the same, with vigilance & promptitude to exert their respective Authorities, & to be aiding and assisting to the carrying this Proclamation & every part thereof into full effect.

Provided nevertheless that if any such Vessel shall be forced into the Harbors or waters of the U.S. by distress, by the dangers of the Sea, or by the pursuit of an enemy, or shall enter them charged with dispatches or business, from their Government, or shall be a public Packet for the conveyance of letters & dispatches, the Commanding Officer, immediately reporting his vessel to the Collector of the District, stating the object or causes of entering the Said Harbors or waters, and conforming himself to the regulations in that case prescribed under the Authority of the laws, shall be allowed the benefit of such regulations respecting repairs, supplies, stay, intercourse & departure as shall be permitted under the same authority.

In testimony whereof I have caused the Seal of the United States to be affixed to these presents & Signed the Same.

Given at the city of Washington the 2d day of July in the year of our Lord 1807, & of the Sovereignty & Independence of the United States the 31st

Th: Jefferson.

By the President:
James Madison Secretary of State.

DS, DNA, RG11, General Records of the U.S. Government, Presidential Proclamations, Vol. 1.

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PRESIDENTIAL MESSAGE TO CONGRESS

[Extract] [October 27, 1807]

. . . on the 22d day of June last, by a formal Order from a British Admiral, the frigate *Chesapeak*, leaving her port for a distant service, was attacked by one of those Vessels which had been lying in our harbours under the indulgences of hospitality, was disabled from proceeding, had several of her crew killed, & four taken away. On this Outrage no commentaries are necessary. it's character has been pronounced by the indignant Voice of our Citizens with an emphasis & unanimity never exceeded. I immediately by proclamation, interdicted our harbors & waters to all British armed vessels, forbade intercourse with them, & uncertain how far hostilities were intended, & the town of Norfolk indeed being threatened with immediate attack, a sufficient force was ordered for the protection of that place, & such other preparations commenced & pursued as the prospect rendered proper. An armed vessel of the United States was dispatched with instructions to our ministers at London, to call on that Government for the satisfaction & security required by the outrage. a very short interval ought now to bring the answer, which shall be communicated to you as soon as recieved. then also, or as soon after as the public interests shall be found to admit, the unratified treaty, & proceedings relative to it, shall be made known to you.

The aggression, thus begun, has been continued on the part of the British Commanders, by remaining within our waters in defiance of the Authority of the Country; by habitual violations of it's jurisdiction, & at length by putting to death one of the persons whom they had forcibly taken from on board the *Chesapeak*. these Aggravations necessarily lead to the policy either of never admitting an armed vessel into our harbors, or of maintaining in every Harbour such an armed force as may constrain Obedience to the laws, & protect the lives and property of our citizens against their armed guests. but the expense of such a standing force, & it's inconsistence with our principles, dispense with those courtesies which would necessarily call for it, & leave us equally free to exclude the Navy, as we are the Army of a foreign power, from entering our limits.

To former violations of maritime rights, another is now added of very extensive effect. the Government of that nation has issued an Order interdicting all trade by neutrals between ports not in Amity with them. & being now at war with nearly every nation on the Atlantic and Mediterranean seas, our Vessels are required to sacrifice their cargoes at the first Port they touch, or to return home without the benefit of going to any other market. Under this new law of the Ocean, our trade on the Mediterranean has been swept away by seizures & condemnations, & that in other seas is threatened with the same fate. . . .

The appropriations, of the last Session, for the defence of our seaport towns & harbours, were made under expectation that a continuance of our peace would permit us to proceed in that work according to our convenience. It has been thought better to apply the sums then given towards the defence of New York, Charleston, & New Orleans chiefly, as most open & most likely first to need protection; & to leave places less immediately in danger to the provisions of the present Session.

The Gunboats too already provided have on a like principle, been chiefly assigned to New York, New Orleans & the Chesapeak. Whether our moveable force on the water, so material in aid of the defensive works on the Land, should be augmented in this or any other form, is left to the wisdom of the Legislature. for the purpose of manning these vessels, in sudden attacks on our Harbours, it is a matter for consideration whether the Seamen of the U.S. may not justly be formed into a special militia, to be called on for tours of duty, in defence of the Harbours where they shall happen to be; the ordinary Militia of the place furnishing that portion which may consist of Landsmen.

The moment our peace was threatened, I deemed it indispensable to secure a greater provision of those articles of military stores, with which our magazines were not sufficiently furnished-to have awaited a previous & special sanction by law, would have lost occasions which might not be retrieved. I did not hesitate therefore to authorize engagements for such supplements to our existing Stock as would render it adequate to the emergencies threatening us; & I trust that the Legislature feeling the same anxiety for the safety of our country, so materially advanced by this precaution, will approve when done, what they would have seen so important to be done, if then assembled. Expenses, also unprovided for, arose out of the necessity of calling all our Gun-boats into actual service for the defence of our Harbours, of all which Accounts will be laid before you. . . .

Th: Jefferson
Octob. 27. 1807.

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DS, DNA, RG46, RS, 10th Congress, Annual Message of the President (SEN 10A E1).

The Embargo

By expelling British warships from American waters, President Jefferson effectually signalled that the United States was not going to war over the Chesapeake-Leopard *affair. Jefferson and his advisors preferred to use peaceful coercion to gain their ends, and they were convinced that the United States had great leverage in her role as a producer of raw materials and consumer of imported manufactures. If Britain could be deprived of a marketplace for the products of her factories, and if she could be forced to admit she could not do without American agricultural products, she would eventually yield, despite her military and naval superiority. Such was the reasoning of those who favored economic measures instead of military force.*

On 7 January 1807, a British Order in Council had prohibited ships from participating in the coastal trade of France and her allies. Napoleon's Berlin Decree became effective in September barring commerce with the British Isles. Britain's response came in November when another Order in Council banned trade with continental ports where British trade was excluded. Only by passing through British customs could neutral ships then proceed to open European ports. Napoleon's rejoinder was the Milan Decree of 17 December which declared that any ships which passed through British ports were "denationalized" and were subject to seizure as British property.

The Congress passed Jefferson's embargo, and it became law on 22 December 1807.[1] *It prohibited all land and seaborne commerce with foreign nations. Shipowners had to post bonds worth double the value of craft and cargo, guaranteeing that such would land at U.S. ports. Incoming foreign ships were forbidden to carry U.S. cargo out. Its provisions were sweeping but vague, and additional laws were passed to tighten up loopholes. Yet legislators had failed to reckon with the ease with which provisions could be evaded in certain parts of the country and the degree to which it would hurt the citizenry where it was most strictly carried out. The original purpose of the law was not to injure Americans but to pressure Britain, yet the effect was largely opposite the intent. Significant opposition arose to the laws in New*

England, treasury receipts drawn from customs fees fell, and Thomas Jefferson left office in 1809 a wounded and somewhat perplexed man.

The United States Navy and revenue cutters belonging to the Treasury Department bore the brunt of enforcing the provisions of the embargo at sea. The following document contains orders to Lieutenant Samuel Elbert, stationed at St. Marys, Georgia, where he was in charge of a division of gunboats. The same orders were sent to many other officers, from Lieutenant Thomas Macdonough at Passamaquoddy, to Lieutenant James Lawrence at New York, and Lieutenant John D. Henley at New Orleans. They had their work cut out for them. Ships often escaped through the connivance of the customs agents themselves, masters put into foreign ports such as Havana claiming dire emergencies, and the British encouraged shippers to evade the laws. In sum, enforcement was a futile exercise that revealed more problems than it solved.

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1 *For thorough studies of the embargo and its effects, see Louis M. Sears,* Jefferson and the Embargo *(Durham, N.C., 1927) and Burton Spivak,* Jefferson's English Crisis: Commerce, Embargo and the Republican Revolution *(Charlottesville, Va., 1979).*

Secretary of the Navy Smith to Lieutenant Samuel Elbert

Lieut. Saml Elbert,
St Mary's, Ga.

Navy Depm.
2. May 1808.

You will herewith receive a copy of the Embargo Laws. You will use the force under your direction to enforce these Laws within our Lines in the St Mary's and in the adjacent waters. Capt Dent will send you two other Gunboats *No 3* & *No 9*.

The 7th sec. of the act of 25 April p. 15 points out your general duty and requires your particular attention.

You will so dispose the force under your command as to seize the Boats and vessels of American Citizens that may be found violating or attempting to violate the embargo Laws–to seize the boats and vessels belonging to Citizens or subjects of any other nation that may be found violating or attempting to violate, within the jurisdiction of the United States, the embargo Laws–to prevent any of our Boats and vessels going within the spanish lines–to watch any deposits made on our side with intention to carry them across, and to assist, if requested, the revenue Officers to take such deposits in custody, and generally to enforce the embargo Laws.

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You are strictly enjoined not to violate by any act whatever the acknowledged jurisdiction of Spain.[1] Carefully avoid any collision with the subjects of that or any other nation. The Collector at St Mary's will inform you of the precise boundaries of the United States.

You will transmit to me frequent accounts of your proceedings, and of all circumstances worthy of communication, that may occur. Respectfully

Rt. Smith

[Copies to: all Lieutenants]

Copy, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 8, p. 66.

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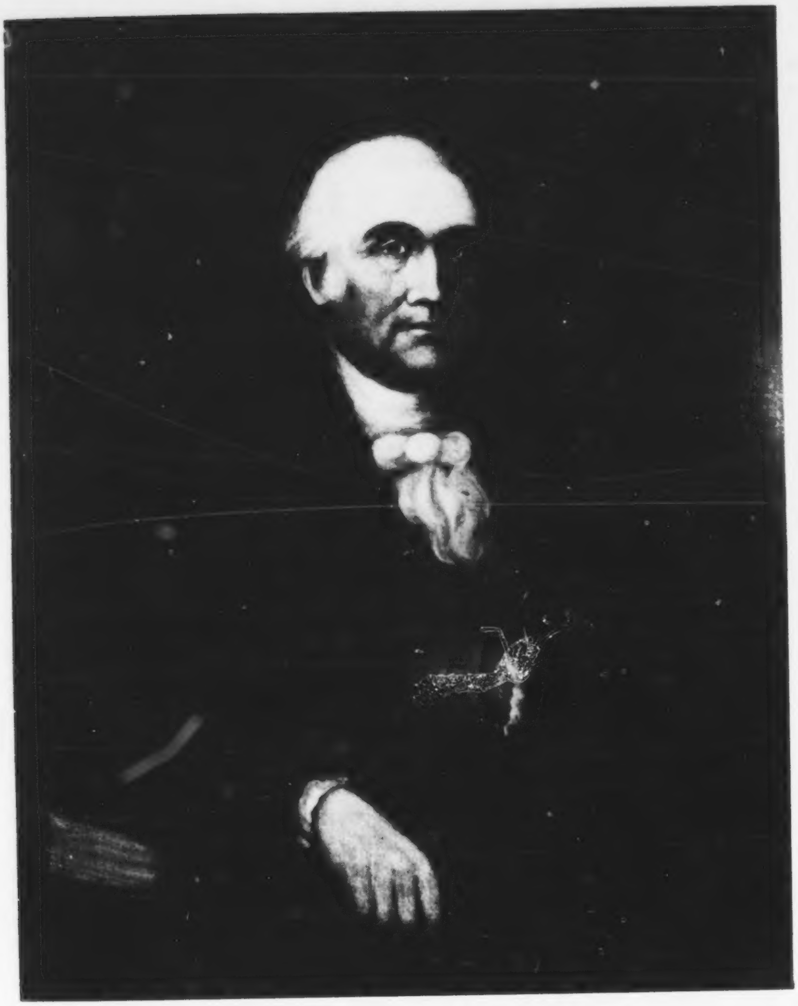
[1] At this time, Florida was Spanish territory and was divided into East and West Florida at the Apalachicola River. The United States claimed the coastal strip between the Mississippi and Perdido Rivers as a result of the Louisiana Purchase. American settlers in West Florida raised a revolt and declared an independent republic in 1810. President Madison proclaimed West Florida to be United States Territory shortly afterward. In 1812, the president sent and then recalled an expedition to East Florida. U.S. forces seized Mobile in 1813 and kept control thereafter. Spain, an ally of Great Britain, held East Florida until 1819 when it was ceded to the United States in the Adams-Onís Treaty. For discussions of the Floridas before and during the War of 1812, see Isaac J. Cox, *The West Florida Controversy, 1798–1813* (Baltimore, 1918) and Rembert W. Patrick, *Florida Fiasco: Rampant Rebels on the Georgia-Florida Border, 1810–1815* (Athens, Ga., 1954).

A New Naval Policy, 1809–1810

The elections of 1808 brought James Madison to the presidency. One of his first acts was the appointment of Paul Hamilton, a South Carolina planter, as secretary of the navy. To him fell the task of preparing the navy for a more active role in defending American merchantmen and sailors as they returned to sea in greater numbers.

Before President Jefferson left office, he signed a "Non-Intercourse Act" which repealed the Embargo as of 15 March 1809. By this act, trade was resumed with all nations, except France and Great Britain, but the president was authorized to resume trade with either belligerent when that nation ceased to violate America's neutral rights. Under the Embargo, the U.S. Navy's principal task had been enforcement of its provisions. Senior officers were given the task of commanding gunboat flotillas. For example, Commodore John Rodgers, based



Secretary of the Navy Robert Smith

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best copy available

at New York, had operational control of gunboats from Delaware Bay to the northern coast of Maine, while Commodore Stephen Decatur was charged with operations in Chesapeake Bay and along the coasts of Virginia and the Carolinas.[1] *When the embargo was repealed, however, the navy changed course. Acting Secretary Charles Goldsborough ordered all gunboats laid up in ordinary except those on the New Orleans station.*[2]

Since 1806, most of the heavier American ships had either been laid up or were undergoing repairs at a rather slow pace. In early 1810, trying to make up for the years of lost time, the Navy Department sought to reactivate its ships. Hamilton appointed a board comprised of Commodore Rodgers, Captain Thomas Tingey, commandant of the Washington Navy Yard, and newly promoted Captain Isaac Chauncey to consider the best methods of repairing the frigates Congress, Constellation, Adams, *and* New York.[3] *The first three were found to be essentially sound and worth repairing, but* New York *had been neglected for too long and was doomed to remain in ordinary.*

With American ships returning to European waters, there were bound to be more seizures by British warships, an increase in impressments, and sequestrations of American ships in the ports of France and her allies. On 1 May 1810, Congress passed Macon's Bill No. 2. This authorized the president to reopen trade with either France or Britain, and, if either nation revoked its edicts against neutral shipping, to prohibit trade with the other. Thus, the Madison administration hoped to play off one desperate enemy against another using trade as bait. This stratagem did not work as planned. The French informed the administration that they had lifted their restrictions when in fact they had not.[4] *Misled, Madison then prohibited trade between the United States and Britain. This led to new embarrassments and greater tensions in Anglo-American relations.*

To prepare the navy for renewed clashes with British warships which were banned from American territorial waters under Macon's No. 2, Navy Secretary Hamilton issued a general order that specifically referred to the Chesapeake-Leopard *affair. Though two years had passed, the memory of that humiliation still rankled American naval officers. Hamilton addressed these instructions to Commodore Rodgers on 9 June 1810, and Rodgers then readdressed them to his subordinate commanders. The text that follows is Rodgers's letter to Captain Isaac Hull of the* Constitution.

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[1] *Smith to Rodgers, 6 May 1808, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 8, p. 72; and Smith to Rodgers, 1 June 1808, ibid., pp. 88–89.*

[2] *Goldsborough to Rodgers, 24 Apr. 1809, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 8, p. 311; and Goldsborough to Porter, 24 Apr. 1809, ibid., p. 314.*

3. *Hamilton to Rodgers, Tingey, and Chauncey, 22 Jan. 1810, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 9, p. 19.*

4. *This "ruse" was contained in an ambiguously worded letter from the Duke of Cadore, foreign minister of France, to John Armstrong, U.S. minister plenipotentiary, asserting that the Berlin and Milan Decrees would cease to have effect by 1 Nov., providing that either Britain withdrew her Orders in Council or the U.S. prohibited commerce with Britain. Although France proceeded to act as though the letter had not been sent, President Madison chose to accept it at face value. See Perkins,* Prologue to War, *pp. 244-52.*

Commodore John Rodgers to Captain Isaac Hull

U.S. Frigate *President*
Hampton Roads June 19th 1810

Sir,

The subjoined is a transcript from the Orders of the Honble the Secretary of the Navy to me, as Commander of a Squadron (of which the Vessel under your command is one) and relates to our situation with the two great Belligerants of Europe (England and France) which transcript you are to consider as Public Orders, and communicate them to your officers, as also to execute the same, in conformity with the just and spirited language which they breathe.

"You, like every other patriotic American, have observed and deeply feel the injuries and insults heaped on our Country by the two great belligerants of Europe; and you must also believe, that (calculating by the past) from neither are we to expect liberality or justice, but on the contrary that no opportunity will be lost of adding to the outrages, to which for years we have been subjected-Amongst these stands most conspicuous the inhuman and dastardly attack on our Frigate the *Chesapeake*-an outrage which prostrated the flag of our Country and has imposed on the American people, cause of ceaseless mourning. That same spirit which has originated and has refused atonement for this act of brutal injustice, exists still with Great Britain; and from France likewise we have no reason to expect any regard to our rights-What has been perpetrated may again be attempted. It is therefore, our duty to be prepared and determined at every hazard, to vindicate the injured honour of our Navy, and revive the drooping Spirit of the Nation. Influenced by these considerations, it is expected, that while you conduct the force under your command, consistently with the principles of a strict and upright neutrality, you are to maintain and support at every risk & cost, the dignity of our Flag; And, that

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offering yourself no unjust aggression, your are to submit to none, not even a menace or threat from a force not materially your Superiour" I am Sir, [&c.]

Jn^{o} Rodgers

Capt Isaac Hull
Comdg U.S. Frigt *Constitution*

LS, DNA, RG45, AF 7, 1810.

President vs. *Little Belt*

During the years 1810–1812, U.S. Navy ships were organized into two major squadrons: the "northern division" sailed under Commodore John Rodgers, based at New York, while the "southern division" was based at Norfolk under the command of Commodore Stephen Decatur. Rodgers's flagship was the frigate President, *44, commanded by Master Commandant Charles Ludlow. Other ships in the division were* Constitution, *44, Captain Isaac Hull, brig* Argus, *18, Lieutenant James Lawrence, and schooner* Revenge, *12, Lieutenant Oliver H. Perry.*

Navy Secretary Hamilton's standing orders instructed Rodgers to protect American merchantmen within a league of the coast from harassment by British or French warships, to seize all private armed vessels illegally fitted out in U.S. ports, to report all U.S. citizens found assisting or supplying foreign armed ships, and, if called upon, to assist customs officers in compelling armed ships to leave U.S. territorial waters. Cruising under these orders, Rodgers was on the alert for any behavior by foreign warships that could lead to a repetition of the Chesapeake *affair.*

During the spring of 1811, after having spent "winter quarters" with his squadron at New London, Rodgers sailed for the Chesapeake and put into Annapolis in President. *While visiting his family at Havre de Grace, Rodgers received a letter from Secretary Hamilton advising him that British and French cruisers were interrupting trade off New York. Hamilton ordered Rodgers to return to his station immediately.* President *cleared Cape Henry on 14 May and set a northeasterly course. Two days later, Rodgers sighted and went in chase of a strange warship* *which stood towards him and then fled. The identity and true size of this ship was not discovered until the following day after the action described in the following documents took place.*

She was, in fact, the British 20-gun sloop of war Lille Belt *or* Little Belt, *as she is commonly called.* Little Belt *carried fewer men and guns than* President, *but her maneuvers and the behavior of Commander Arthur Bingham, her commanding officer, prior to the battle aroused Rodgers' suspicions. In the night action of some fifteen minutes that followed,* Little Belt *was severely damaged and suffered 9 men killed and 23 wounded. Following the action, reports differed as to who hailed first and fired first. Neither commander wished the dubious honor of having fired first in such an unequal battle under confusing conditions.*

Secretary Hamilton convened a court of inquiry at Commodore Rodgers's request on 30 August 1811. After twelve days of testimony and examination of fifty witnesses, the court concluded that a single cannon fired by Little Belt *commenced the exchange and that Rodgers, in an attempt to halt the combat, had twice hailed during the fray when* Little Belt's *guns had been silenced. Thus, the court rejected Bingham's report of the event which is printed below, although the latter was widely accepted as the true version in England.*

Commander Arthur Bingham, R.N., to Vice Admiral Herbert Sawyer, R.N.

Copy

His Majesty's Ship *Little Belt*.
21st May 1811
Lat. 36. 53. °N. Long 71. 49 W.
Cape Charles bearing West 48 Miles

Sir

I beg leave to acquaint you that in pursuance of your Orders to join H.M.S. *Guirriere* and being on my return from the Northward not having fallen in with her, that at 11 A. M May 16th saw a strange sail at which I gave chase, at 1 P.M. discovered her to be a Man of War, apparently a Frigate standing to the Eastward, who when he made us out edged away for us & set his royals, made the Signal 275 & finding it not answered, concluded she was an American Frigate, as she had a Commodore's Blue Pendant flying at the Main, Hoisted the Colours & made all sail South, the Course I intended Steering round Cape Hatteras, the stranger edging away, but not making more sail, at 3.30. she

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made sail in Chace when I made the private Signal which was not answered at 6.30 finding he gained so considerably on us as not to be able to elude him during the Night, being within Gun Shot, and clearly discerning the stars in his broad Pendant, I imaged the most prudent method was to bring too and hoist the Colors, that no mistake might arise, and that he might see what we were[;] the ship was therefore brought too, Colors hoisted, Guns double shotted, & every preparation made in case of a Surprize, by his manner of steering down he evidently wished to lay his ship in[to] position for raking: which I frustrated by wearing three times about 8.15. He came within Hail, I Hailed & asked what ship it was, he repeated my questions, I again hailed & asked what Ship it was: He again repeated my Words & fired a Broadside, which I instantly returned, the Action then became general & continued for three Quarters of an Hour, when she ceased firing and appeared to be on fire about the main Hatchway, he then filled I was obliged to desist from firing as the ship falling off no Gun would bear, and had no after sail to keep her too, all the rigging & Sails cut to pieces not abrace or Bowline left. He Hailed and asked what ship this was. I told him, he then asked me if I had struck my Colours my Answer was no! and asked what Ship it was, as plainly as I could understand he having shot some distance at this time, he answered the United States Frigate, he fired no more Guns but stood from us, giving no reason for his most extraordinary conduct: at Day Light in the Morning saw a ship to Windward, when having made out well what we were, bore up and passed within Hail fully prepared for Action, about 8 OClock he hailed and said If I pleased he would send a Boat on board, I replied in the Affirmative and a Boat accordingly came, with an Officer and Message from Commodore Rogers of the *President* United States Frigate, to say that he lamented much the unfortunate Affair (as he termed it) that had happened, and that had he known our Force was so inferior he should not have fired at me. I asked his Motive for having fired at all, his reply was that we fired the first Gun at him, which was positively not the case: I cautioned both the Officers and Men to be particularly careful and not suffer more than one Man to be at the Gun, nor is it probable that a sloop of War within Pistol Shot of a large 44 Gun Frigate should commence Hostilities, he offered me every assistance I stood in need off, and submitted to me that I had better put into one of the Ports of the United States, which I immediately declined.

By the manner in which he apologized it appeared to me evident, that had he fallen in with a British Frigate, he would certainly have brought her to Action and what further confirms me in that opinion is that his Guns were not only loaded with Grape and round Shot but with every scrap of Iron that could possibly be collected.

I have to lament the loss of thirty two Men Killed & Wounded among whom [is] the Master.

His Majesty's Ship is much damaged in her Masts, sails, rigging & Hull, and as there are many shots thro' between Wind and Water & many shot still remaining in her Side and Upper Works all shot away, Starboard Pump also, I have judged it proper to proceed to Halifax, which will I hope meet your Approbation.

I cannot speak in too high terms of the Officers and Men I have the Honor to command for their Steady and Active Conduct during the whole of this business. We had much to do as a Gale of Wind came on the 2nd Night after the Action.

I have to request you will be pleased to recommend to the Notice of my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, my first Lieutenant Mr Jno Moberly, who is in every respect a most excellent Officer and afforded me very great Assistance in stopping the Leaks himself in the Gale, securing the Masts & doing every thing in his power.

It would be the greatest injustice was I not also to speak most highly of Lt [Thomas] Levell Second Lieutenant, of Mr James McQueen the Master, who as I before stated was wounded in the right Arm in nearly the middle of the Action and Mr Wilson Masters Mate, indeed the conduct of every Officer and Man was so good it is impossible for me to discriminate.

I beg leave to enclose a list of the Thirty two Men killed and Wounded most of them mortally I fear.

I hope Sir in this Affair I shall appear to have done my Duty and conducted myself as I ought to have done against so superior a force and that the Honor of the British Colors was well supported. I have the Honor to be &c

(Signed) A B Bingham
Captain

Rear Admiral Sawyer

Copy, UkLPR, Adm. 1/501, pp. 100-102. Enclosed with this letter was a list of killed and wounded. See ibid., p. 103.

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COMMODORE JOHN RODGERS TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY PAUL HAMILTON

U.S. Frigate *President*
off Sandy Hook May 23d 1811

Sir

I have the honor to acquaint you that in obedience to your instructions of the 6th Inst, I sailed from Annapolis on the 10th, but owing to head winds I did not get to sea until the 14th, on which day off Cape Henry, I supplyed the Ship *Madison* of Baltimore, belonging to Mr James Bias, with an anchor and Cable, she being in distress on account of having lost all hers except one which was not sufficient to ride by. On the 15th Inst Cape Henry bearing W.S.W. distant 50 miles, fell in with a second Vessel, the Brig *Sussex* of New York, Neat Master bound to Norfolk from Oronoke [*Ocracoke*], in distress for provissions, which I supplyed

I regret extremely being under the necessity of representing to you an event that transpired on the night of the 16th Inst between the Ship under my command, & His Britanic Majesty's Ship of War the *Lille Belt*, commanded by Capt Bingham: the result of which has given me much pain, as well on account of the injury she sustained; as that I should have been compelled to the measure that produced it, by a vessel of her inferiour force. The circumstances are as follows: on the 16th Inst at twenty five minutes past Meridian, in seventeen fathoms water, Cape Henry bearing S.W. distant fourteen or fifteen leagues, a sail was discovered from our mast heads in the East, standing towards us under a press of sail–at 1/2 past one, the symmetry of her upper sails (which were at this time distinguishable from our Deck) & her making signals, showed her to be a Man of War–at forty five minutes past one P.M. hoisted our Ensign and Pendant: when finding her signals not answered, she wore and stood to the Southward–Being desirous of speaking her, & of ascertaining what she was, I now made sail in chace; & by 1/2 past three P.M. found we were coming up with her, as by this time the upper part of her stern began to shew itself above the horizon ~~from our Deck~~. The wind now began & continued gradually to decrease, so as to prevent my being able to approach her sufficiently before sun set, to discover her actual force (which the position she preserved during the chace was calculated to conceal) or to judge even to what nation she belonged; as she appeared studiously to decline showing her Colours–at fifteen or twenty minutes past seven

P.M. the chace took in her studding sails & soon after hauled up her courses & hauled by the wind on the Starboard tack. she at the same time hoisted an Ensign or Flag at her Mizen Peak, but it was too dark for me to discover what nation it represented; now for the first time, her broad side was presented to our view, but night had so far progressed, that altho' her appearance indicated she was a Frigate, I was unable to determine her actual force-at fifteen minutes before eight P.M. being about a mile & a half from her, the wind at the time very light, I directed Captn Ludlow to take a position to windward of her & on the same tack, within short speaking-distance. This however the commander of the chace appeared from his manoeuvres to be anxious to prevent, as he wore, & hauled by the wind on different tacks four times successivly between this period & the time of our arriving at the position which I had ordered to be taken-at fifteen or twenty minutes past eight, being a little forward of her weather beam & distant from seventy to a hundred yards, I hailed "What Ship is that"? to this enquiry no answer was given, but I was hailed by her commander & asked "What Ship is that"? Having asked the first question, & of course considering myself entitled by the common rules of politeness to the first answer, after a pause of fifteen or twenty seconds, I reiterated my first enquiry of "What Ship is that"? & before I had time to take the trumpet from my mouth, was answered by a shot that cut off one of our Maintopmast breast back stay's & went into our Main Mast, at this instant Capt [Henry] Caldwell (of Marines) who was standing very near to me on the gangway having observed "Sir, she has fired at us" caused me to pause for a moment just as I was in the act of giving an order to fire a shot in return: & before I had time to resume the repetition of the intended order, a shot was actually fired from the second divission of this Ship; & was scarcely out of the gun, before it was answered from our assumed enemy by three others in quick succession; & soon after the rest of his Broadside & musquetry. When the first shot was fired, being under an impression that it might possibly have proceeded from accident & without the orders of the commander, I had determined at the moment to fire only a single Shot in return, but the immediate repetition of the previous unprovoked outrage, induced me to believe that the insult was premeditated; & that from our adversary's being at the time as ignorant of our real force as I was of his, he thought this perhaps a favorable opportunity of acquiring promotion, altho' at the expence of violating our neutrality & insulting our Flag: I accordingly with that degree of repugnance incident to feeling equally determined

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neither to be the aggressor, or to suffer the Flag of my Country to be insulted with impunity; gave a general order to fire; the effect of which, in from four to six minutes as near as I can judge, having produced a partial silence of his guns, I gave orders to cease firing, discovering by the feeble opposition that it must be a ship of very inferior force to what I had supposed; or that some untoward accident had happened to her-my orders in this instance however (altho' they proceeded alone from motives of humanity and a determination not to spill a drop of blood unnecessarily) I had in less than four minutes some reason to regret, as he renewed his fire, of which two 32 pound Shot, cut off one of our Fore shrouds & injured our Fore Mast-It was now that I found myself under the painful necessity of giving orders for a repetition of our fire, against a force which my forbearance alone had enabled to do us any injury of moment: Our fire was accordingly renewed & continued from three to five minutes longer, when perceiving our opponent's Gaff & Colours down, his Maintopsail Yard upon the cap & his fire silenced, altho' it was so dark that I could not discern any other particular injury we had done, or how far he was in a situation to do us further harm; I nevertheless embraced the earliest moment to stop our fire and prevent the further effusion of blood-Here a pause of half a minute or more took place, at the end of which our adversary not shewing a further disposition to fire, I hailed and again asked "What Ship is that"? & learnt for the first time that it was a ship of His Britanic Majesty, but owing to its blowing rather fresher than it had done, I was unable to learn her name-after having informed her commander of the name of this Ship, I gave orders to wear, run under his lee & haul by the wind on the Starboard tack, & heave to under Topsails & repair what little injury we had sustained in our rigging &c; which was accordingly executed & we continued lying to on different tacks with a number of lights displayed, in order that our adversary might the better discern our position, & command our assistance in case he found it necessary during the night-At day light on the 17th he was discovered several miles to leeward, when I gave orders to bear up & run down to him under easy sail; after hailing him, I sent a boat on board with Lieut [John O.] Creighton to learn the names of the Ship & her commander, with directions to ascertain the damage she had sustained, & to inform her commander how much I regretted the necessity on my part which had led to such an unhappy result-at the same time to offer all the assistance that the Ship under my command afforded, in repairing the damages his had sustained-At nine A.M. Lieut Creighton

"*The* Little Belt, *Sloop of War, Captn Bingham nobly supporting the Honor of the British Flag, against the* President *United States Frigate, Commodore Rogers, May 15th, 1811.*"

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returned with information that it was His B. Majesty's Ship *Lille Belt*, commanded by Capt Bingham: who in a polite manner declined the acceptance of any assistance; saying at the same time that he had on board all the necessary requisites to repair the damages, sufficiently to enable him to return to Halifax. This however was not the most unpleasant part of Capt Bingham's communication to Lieut Creighton, as he informed him, that in addition to the injury his ship had sustained, between twenty & thirty of his crew had been killed & wounded.

The regret that this information caused me, was such, you may be sure, as a man might be expected to feel, whose greatest pride is to prove without ostentation, by every public as well as private act, that he possesses a humane & generous heart; & with these sentiments, believe me, Sir, that such a communication would cause me the most acute pain during the remainder of my life, had I not the consolation to know that there was no alternative left me, between such a sacrifice & one which would have been still greater; namely to have remained a passive spectator of insult to the Flag of my Country, whilst it was confided to my protection & I would have you to be convinced, Sir, that however much individually I may previously have had reason to feel incensed at the repeated outrages committed on our flag by British Ships of War, neither my passions or prejudices had any agency in this affair

To my Country, I am well convinced of the importance of the transaction which has imposed upon me the necessity of making you this communication: I must therefore from motives of delicacy, connected with personal considerations, solicit that you will be pleased to request the President to authorise a formal enquiry to be instituted into all the circumstances as well as into every part of my conduct connected with the same

The injury sustained by the Ship under my command is very trifling except to the Fore & Main Masts, which I before mentioned; no person killed, & but one (a boy) wounded

For further particulars, I refer you to Capt Caldwell, who is charged with the delivery of this communication I have the honor to be

Jn^{o} Rodgers

P.S. The *Lille Belt* is a Corvette about the size of the *John Adams*, but owing to her great length, her having a Poop & Top Gallt Forecastle & room to mount three more guns of a side than she actually carries, her deep bulwark & the manner of stowing her Hammocks, she has the appearance of a Frigate & would always be taken for such from the view we had of her during the chace, as we never had a sight of her Broad side until it was too dark to ascertain that she only carried one tier of Guns-she is by Steele's list (1809) rated a 20 Gun Ship

Jn^{o} Rodgers

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1811, Vol. 1, No. 230.

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON TO COMMODORE JOHN RODGERS

Comm: Rogers
New York

Nav: Department
28. May 1811.

I have received by Capt. Caldwell, your letter, detailing your rencounter, with British Sloop of War, the *Little Belt*. You will repair your ship immediately, & be in every respect prepared, for a trial, much more serious than that, to which you have been invited; for I am certain, that the chastisment, which you have very properly inflicted, will cause you to be marked for British vengeance: while under this impression, all I ask of Heaven, is, that you may be allowed fair play, by being assailed only by an equal force: in this event, you will be victorious, & affix a standard of immitation for the American Navy:-If you fail, it will be only, because, a force far above your rate, is sent against you; & even then, you will leave no cause of rejoicing to your antagonist. Direct Capt Chauncey, to have new masts made for you immediately:-You must want nothing-. when you put to sea, you will look for Comm: Decatur, & take him with you to your station; cause him to complete his crew immediately, to be equally prepared, & to remain at your side, until further orders. By Capt Caldwell, I will write you the sentiments of the President:-for myself, I declare, that my sentiments towards, & estimation of you, go beyond what may be expressed by the words, esteem & respect.

Write me the name, & character, of your wounded boy; & inform me if he is fit to hold a midshipmans warrant; Capt Caldwell, states him to have behaved gallantly; I wish to see him rewarded;-If in addition to his gallantry, he is of good character generally; I would hug him to my bosom (whatever may be his condition, or circumstance in life),

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while I made him an officer, in the American Navy. May honor, health & happiness continue to attend you, is the cordial wish of YOS

P. Hamilton

Copy, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 9, p. 363.

The Navy and the "War Hawk" Congress

The mood of the country shifted gradually toward war during the later months of 1811, but the Madison administration remained hopeful that some concessions could be obtained on long-standing grievances through diplomatic means. To a large extent, these hopes leaned upon a slender reed. Augustus John Foster, Britain's newest minister to Washington, was a genial but inexperienced diplomat who found it difficult to gain an accurate reading of the American mind. He spent considerable time in the company of Federalist opponents of the administration who persistently denigrated the Republican leadership. By the same token, Foster's instructions allowed him no freedom on the key questions of the Orders in Council or impressment of seamen, two issues of the highest importance to Madison and his cabinet. No settlement had yet been reached on the Chesapeake *affair, although diplomats had discussed the question of reparations and return of seamen for over three years. When the British approached Secretary of State James Monroe to ask for reparations for damage to* Little Belt, *he responded by saying that there could be no discussion of this until the* Chesapeake *question had been settled satisfactorily.*

Rumors of renewed Indian warfare against settlers on the Northwest frontier were confirmed in November. Governor William Henry Harrison of the Indiana Territory repelled an attack at Tippecanoe. Westerners acclaimed this a victory. They firmly believed that this and other attacks had been encouraged by the British in Canada. Frontiersmen and their political representatives began to urge an attack upon Canada to halt Indian raids, seize control of the lucrative northern fur trade, and possibly to acquire additional lands. An aggressive "war hawk" spirit infected many congressmen from western and southern states. Several of these men, such as Henry Clay, Langdon Cheves, and Peter Porter were in leading posts and made their in-

fluence felt. They were optimistic that use of force would attain what years of patient diplomacy and peaceful coercion had not.

When Congress assembled in November, the members heard President Madison's ambivalent "State of the Union" message. He had decided to try to keep the peace while preparing for war. On one hand, he advised making preparations to strengthen defenses, bring the army up to strength, enlarge military and naval stockpiles, and improve the navy. On the other hand, the president evinced an impartial tone toward Britain and France, suggesting that if they would refrain from provocations, the United States was ready to ease her trade regulations.

Langdon Cheves, chairman of the House Naval Committee, was a South Carolinian, as was Secretary of the Navy Paul Hamilton. Cheves took up the president's vague suggestion that the navy be improved and sent to Hamilton a series of questions, inviting his friend to offer recommendations on important naval issues. These questions and the secretary's reply are printed below. Hamilton's carefully reasoned suggestions were graciously received but were treated more like wishes than urgent national priorities. Hamilton argued that twelve 74-gun ships of the line and ten additional 38-gun frigates would be an adequate defense against the small force Britain might be able to spare from European waters. Apparently, the committee considered an authorization to build ships of the line politically impossible to obtain. When Cheves reported his bill to the House, there was no mention of the 74s, though the committee did support Hamilton's proposal for ten additional frigates, the creation of a stock of timber, and construction of a drydock for maintenance of existing warships.

When the naval bill came to a vote, some "war hawks" reflected a western sectional bias and voted against, as did Republicans who were traditionally suspicious of strengthening the naval establishment. During the naval debate, Secretary of the Treasury Albert Gallatin submitted a realistic but unpopular budget containing higher taxes to cover possible war expenses and an expected decline in customs receipts. The additional opposition this generated helped to kill many of the measures that would have enlarged the navy. The final "act concerning the naval establishment" must have been a great disappointment to Secretary Hamilton and his department.[1] *While stockpiling of timber was approved by both houses, they only appropriated enough money to repair and fit out frigates* Chesapeake, Constellation, *and* Adams, *and to increase the number of officers and men sufficient to serve on these ships. The authorization to add new frigates was defeated by a vote of 62 to 59.*[2] *Measures to strengthen the military had not fared much better. As a result, the country was proceeding toward war without providing its officers with the resources they would*

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need to fight successfully against a more experienced and better armed enemy.

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1. *Callan & Russell,* Laws . . . of the Navy, *pp. 176–77.*
2. *Irving Brant,* James Madison, The President, 1809–1812 *(New York, 1956), pp. 402–404.*

LANGDON CHEVES, CHAIRMAN, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES NAVAL COMMITTEE TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Washington November 19, 1811

Sir:

I am directed, by the committee to whom was referred so much of the President's message of the 5th instant as relates to the naval force of the United States, to request a reply from you to the several questions which follow and they have also directed me to ask as early an answer as may be conveniently practicable:

1st. What number of the vessels of war of the United States is now in actual service; and what are their names, rates, and stations?

2d. What number of vessels is laid up in ordinary; what are their names and rates; what will be the expense of repairing and equipping them for actual service; within what time can the same be accomplished; and what will be their aggregate annual expense in service, with that of those now employed?

3rd. What will be the expense of building, manning, and completely equipping for actual service a vessel of each rate of those most useful and most usually employed in modern naval war; and what will be the annual expense of maintaining such vessels, respectively, in actual service?

4th. Will any, and, if any, what, force of vessels, not exceeding the rate of frigates, afford a reasonable protection to the coasting trade and the mouths of the harbors of the United States? If such be deemed incompetent, what other force is deemed requisite?

5th. What materials, for ship building and naval equipment, are deemed imperishable; and to what extent in quantity, and what amount in value, would it be practicable and advisable to provide the same?

6th. What is the number of gunboats belonging to the United States; what is their state of repair; what number is in actual service;

and where are they stationed or laid up?

7th. In the event of putting in commission the ships now laid up in ordinary, could the necessary seamen, to man them, be speedily procured, without an increase of pay or bounty?

I am further directed to request, that you will communicate in your reply any other information which, in your opinion, may be important or material on this subject. I have the honor to be, sir, [&c.]

LANGDON CHEVES.

ASP, Naval Affairs, I: 248.

Secretary of the Navy Hamilton to Langdon Cheves, Chairman of the Naval Committee

[Extract] Navy Depart 3d Decr 1811

I have had the honor of receiving your letter of the 19th inst.

The several questions which you have been pleased to propound to me, involve a scope of information difficult correctly to state, and comprehend points, upon which I am compelled to submit conjecture in some instances instead of fact. The Subject however, is so deeply interesting as to have commanded my most deliberate & anxious investigation.

The papers herewith submitted & marked A: B: & C: will I hope afford satisfactory answers to your three first queries. In reply to the fourth query I have to state that, as to the force necessary to afford a reasonable protection to the coasting trade & the mouths of the harbors of the United States, it appears to me impossible to form a satisfactory opinion, unless we knew the extent of the force by which our coasting trade & the mouths of our harbors may be assailed. The naval nations of Europe employ line of battle ships. The heaviest rate of our vessels of war does not exceed a large 44 gun frigate which is inferior, in number of guns, & men, & weight of metal to a ship of the line. If then, while we have only frigates an enemy should send against us ships of the line, the protection which in such case we should be able to afford to our coasting trade, would obviously be very imperfect. With a force, equal in number & rate to that of an enemy, or to that which enemy at a distance could send against us,

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neither our commerce on our coast nor our harbors would have any danger to apprehend-for considering the numerous dangers of our coast-the heavy gales & fogs, to which it is peculiarly subject-our superior knowledge of the shoals with which it abounds-and the numerous ports to which we have access for victualling repairing & equipping ships: so decided would be our advantage, that it is believed an enemy, only our equal in number & rate of vessels would not, under such circumstances, approach our shores with any intention of remaining for the purpose of molesting our trade. Such indeed are the advantages we possess in these particulars, that I incline to the opinion, that with half the number of vessels of the same rate which might be sent against us, a reasonable protection might generally be afforded to our coasting trade. I do not wish to be considered as giving the opinion that with such a force our coasting trade could be effectually protected-that no capture of our merchant vessels would be made under such circumstances-for even if our force were equal to the enemy, we might expect occasionally to have vessels captured: An enterprizing enemy would watch opportunities & avail himself of them, but in our operations against the enemy we should not, it is presumed, be found deficient in enterprize or vigilance; competent to retort his aggressions & to secure an equivalent for all our losses.

Supposing then a continuance of the present state of things in Europe, and that the United States should come into collision with either of the present great belligerent powers, a naval force of twelve sail of the line (74s) & twenty well constructed frigates, including those we now have rating generally not less than 38 guns, with the addition of our smaller vessels now in service judiciously directed, it is believed would be ample to the protection of our coasting trade generally-would, be competent to annoy extensively the commerce of an enemy-and uniting occasionally in operations with the gun boats already built, if equipped & brought into service-and our fortifications also afford complete protection to our harbours.

The imperishable materials for ship building & naval equipment consist of timber, plank, staves, masts & spars, iron, copper in sheets, bolts & nails, anchors, kentledge, canvas, hempen yarns, &c. In timber of every description required for navy purposes, our Country abounds, and it would at this time be practicable to procure any quantity on terms that are reasonable. It would unquestionably be sound aconomy to keep always on hand an adequate supply of this all important article, which ought to be well seasoned before it is used. The deplorable effects of being compelled, as the Navy Department has frequently been, to use green timber in the repair of our ships, our experience too fully demonstrates. This indeed is one of the principal reasons of the great expense generally & very justly complained of by the guardians of the public purse-happily however, it is perfectly within the reach of our power to remedy this evil, and I do most earnestly recommend to your serious consideration, the propriety of an extra annual appropriation for three years, for the purpose of enabling the Department to provide an extensive stock of every description of timber required for Navy purposes. The other articles of an imperishable nature may be procured as required, or as opportunities offer to obtain them on reasonable terms, out of the general appropriation for Repairs made annually for the support of the Navy-to which purposes it will partly be devoted-and to the encouragement of the manufacture of sail cloth, manufactured within ourselves, of hemp of our own growth, by giving it a preference to that made of foreign hemp.

The paper marked D affords an answer to your sixth query as full as the information in possession of the Department will enable me to give it.

If it should be determined to commission the ships now in ordinary the necessary seamen to man them, can it is confidently believed, be procured without any encrease of pay or of bounty and in time to man them as they may be prepared for service.

In my answer to your fifth query I have stated one of the causes of the great expense of the Navy so generally and it is admitted so justly complained of, and I have suggested a remedy for that particular cause-other causes of expense exist, which may be obviated; and under the latitude you have allowed me I will at this time, state one, which immediately presents itself.

The United States do not own a Dock. To repair our vessels, we are compelled to heave them down-a process attended with great labor-considerable risk & loss of time-and upon a ship thus hove down-the carpenters can not work without much inconvenience. Hence the Department is subjected to much expense, which might be avoided by the construction of one or more suitable Docks. Such a provision even in the present state of our Navy would be valuable for the reasons above stated; but if Congress determine to have built vessels of a rate superior to those we now have, it will certainly [be] found to be indispensable. The accuracy of this remark will be ad-

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mitted, when we consider the force requisite to heave down a ship of the size of even a frigate, and the straining of the frame, when this is done on the principle of the lever.

I have now, Sir, according to my best judgment offered replies to your queries and assuring you of my readiness to obey the further commands of the Committee I have the honor to be, [&c.]

Paul Hamilton

A.

Exhibit shewing the number of the vessels of War
of the United States now in actual service
their names, rates and Stations for the winter.

Names of vessels	rate	Station for the winter	remarks
Frigate *President*	44	Newport R I	under command of Commre Rodgers.
" *Essex*	32		
Ship *John Adams*	20		
Brig *Argus*	16		
Frigate *United States*	44	Hampton Roads	under command of Commre Decatur
" *Congress*	36		
Ship *Wasp*	16		
Brig *Nautilus*	14		
Frigate *Constitution*	44	foreign service	
Ship *Hornet*	16		
Brig *Vixen*	14	Charles S.C:	Under command of Capt Campbell.
" *Enterprize*	14		
Brig *Siren*	16	New Orleans	Under command of Capt Shaw
" *Viper*	10		
Brig *Oneida*	16	Lake Ontario	Lieut Woolsey

B.

Exhibit shewing the number of vessels laid up in Ordinary, their names & rates: the original cost of each including every expense: the probable expense of repairing & equipping each for actual service-the period it will probably take to repair each; and annual expense of each in actual service.

Names of vessels	rate	Original cost		probable expense of repairing	time necessary to repair.	annual expense
		Drs.	Cts	Drs		Drs
Chesapeak	36	220,677	80	120,000	6 months	102,253
Constellation	36	314,212	15	120,000	6 months	102,253
New York	36	159,639	60	120,000	6 months	102,253
Adams	36	76,622	27	60,000	6 months	81,607
Boston	32	119,570	04	60,000	6 months	81,607
						$469,973

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Note the sums & periods of time, estimated for repairing & equipping the vessels of war comprehended in the above statement are in a great degree conjectured, tho' it is presumed that the sums stated would be sufficient, and that in the time stated, the vessels could be repaired.

Until these vessels shall be opened & thoroughly examined, it is obviously impossible to ascertain with any degree of precision, what would be the expense of repairing them, or what time it would take to repair them-for until then their actual state & condition cannot be ascertained. By some it is at this time thought that neither the *New York* nor the *Boston* are worthy of being repaired: but I hope, that on opening them, we shall find them otherwise and under this impression I have returned them in this exhibit. Should they be found to be too rotten to repair, I shall consider it as a serious misfortune-for they have been constructed upon the most approved models for vessels of their rates.

In the estimate of the expense of the Navy for the year 1812-the employment of all our frigates excepting those above stated, and of all our vessels of war, and of Sixty two Gunboats, is contemplated-these objects together with the Corps of Marines, Navy Yards & Ordnance are estimated to cost $2,502,003.90 which is the aggregate amount of the estimate for the year 1812. Of this sum-

The expense of the Corps of marines is estimated at	228,905 90
The expense of Navy Yards, &c	60,000
The expense of Ordnance, &c	60,000
The expense of the vessels of war in commission & of those & the gun boats in ordinary,	1,403,098 00
The expense of the 62 gunboats in commission	750,000 00
Whole amount of the Navy Estimate, year 1812,	$2,502,003 90

If then the frigates now in ordinary were put in Commission their aggregate annual expense in service, with that of those now employed and including every other objects of Navy expense upon the scale contemplated in the estimate for the year 1812 would be the sum stated under the head "annual expense" in the exhibit,

viz:	$469,973
added to the whole amount of the Navy estimate as stated above	$2,502,003 90
which makes	$2,971,976 90

C.

Estimate of the expense of building & completely equipping for actual service vessels of war of various rates and the annual expense of each.

Rate	expense of building		annual expense of each.	Remarks.
	$ Pr gun	Dollars		
74	4,500	333,000	211,784	the frigate *President* cost $220,910 08. the frigate *Philadelphia* $179,349. the *New York* cost $159,639 60. the *Essex* cost $139,362 50. the *John Adams* cost $113,505 72. the *Maryland* cost $70,249 83.
60	4,500	270,000	140,000	
50	4,500	225,000	115,214	
44	4,500	198,000	110,000	
36	4,500	162,000	102,000	
32	4,000	128,000	82,000	
20	3,500	70,000	50,202	

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D.

Exhibit shewing the number & state of the Gun boats of the United States at this time. 30 Novr 1811

Number of Gunboats	where stationed	number in commission	number in Ordinary	under repair	remarks
54.	New York,	20	34	–	by last reports the gunboats in ordinary generally were in a state of preservation: all those in commission are in good condition.
26.	New Orleans,	19	–	7	
14.	Norfolk, Va	8	6	–	
2.	Charleston, S.C.	–	2	–	
4.	Wilmington, N.C.	4	–	–	
11.	St Mary's, Geoa	11			
10.	Washington, Dt Ca	1	9		
8.	Portland, Me		8		
2.	Boston		2		
4.	Connt & R. Island		4		
20.	Philadelphia,		20		
10.	Baltimore Md		10		
165.		62	86	7	

Copy, DNA, RG45, Secretary of the Navy Letters to Congress, Vol. 1, pp. 52–62.

Impressment

The Royal Navy's insatiable need for seamen to man hundreds of ships caused her commanders to seize or "impress" men, whether they were sailors or landsmen. Those first to feel the blow were innocents who happened in the way of a press gang in a British seaport. When this did not satisfy, and frequently it did not, warships halted merchant vessels in the course of blockading and cruising duties and took off by force (1) any Royal Navy deserters they could find among the crew, (2) British subjects who had become naturalized American citizens, whether they were deserters or not, and (3) native-born Americans who could not provide proof of citizenship or whose proof was considered insufficient by boarding officers.

Impressment was centuries old but, as practiced upon American seamen, it had its roots in the Revolutionary War. The phenomenal growth of U.S. seaborne commerce after 1783 created a demand for seamen that resulted in higher wages in America than in Britain. Royal Navy officers viewed the increasing desertion rate with alarm, as did the British Admiralty. Britain considered a man born an Englishman "always an Englishman." Thus, the American process of naturalized citizenship (after 5 years residence) was considered to be invalid as a defense against impressment. Americans, however, viewed their merchantmen as "extensions of territoriality," a concept rejected by Britain which claimed the rights of a belligerent in wartime to stop and search neutral vessels for contraband or deserters.[1]

On 16 October 1807, King George III proclaimed it the duty of naval officers "to seize upon, take and bring" all British subjects who had been "enticed" into the service of other nations. Even former subjects had a duty, it was claimed, to serve Britain, as she had a prior claim on their allegiance. American diplomats had continually rejected such sweeping claims and repeatedly attempted to obtain British concessions from 1792 through the War of 1812, to no avail. Thus impressment became a principal cause for the United States' declaration of war against Great Britain in June 1812.

The hardships suffered by those seized and their families were many and piteous. A pressed sailor was a man whose condition was likened to slavery by those who experienced it, and some were black sailors who could have compared the two systems. Thousands of seamen were seized from American ships during the period 1790–1815 but the figures quoted in contemporary documents are often at variance.

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A conservative estimate of the number of American seamen impressed from 1796 to 1 January 1812 is 9,991, a figure which compensates for duplications of names as they were found in lists made up by the Department of State and American agents for seamen in England. The most severe period was that from 1803 to 1812 when some 6,000 seamen were impressed. Not more than one-third of them were released before the outbreak of the war. Contemporary estimates ranged from 10,000 to 50,000. Realistically speaking, however, it is still provocative to think that probably 750 to 1,000 were impressed annually between 1808 and 1812.[2]

To gain a sense of how many Americans viewed impressment at that time, a series of letters to "Mr. Gales" (Joseph Gales, Jr.), editor of the National Intelligencer, *has been selected. The author remains anonymous, using the pseudonym "Ghost of Montgomery." It is fair to say that his views reflect those of Madison's Republican administration for which* National Intelligencer *was virtually an official organ.*[3]

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[1] Leopard's *impressment of men from* Chesapeake *posed a unique difference in that* Chesapeake *was a public man-of-war.*

[2] *James F. Zimmerman,* Impressment of American Seamen, *Columbia University Studies in History, Economics and Public Law, Vol. CXVIII, No. 1 (New York, 1925), 246–75* passim.

[3] *Federalists from New England generally held the administration's figures to be exaggerated. Despite the fact that New England's seamen were probably the most likely to be impressed, her shipowner politicians were inclined to accept Britain's view of her struggle with France and to see Madisonian Republicans as puppets of Bonaparte's empire. Accommodation with Britain, in view of her overwhelming superiority in naval power seemed the most sensible approach to New England's Federalist merchants. (See Perkins,* Prologue to War, *pp. 88–94).*

"IMPRESSED SEAMEN.
No. I."

——————— "Nothing extenuate,
Nor set down aught in Malice."

Permit me to detail a few particulars relative to this important object of national concern, as it has frequently fallen under my observation at sea, as well as on shore. When vessels are met with on the ocean by British vessels of war; on being boarded, a demand is made of *the roll*, or articles, and the men being mustered, the officer interrogates them, who (if it is bad weather) is generally the sailing-master, or one of his mates, or perhaps a lieutenant; with very little knowledge of mankind, or of national *dialects*, he undertakes to be *sole judge*, to decide and determine the place of birth of every man on board, their legal testimonials (the place where they embarked being strong *prima facie* evidence) to the contrary of his opinion notwithstanding; the fate of the men being thus summarily decided, *the condemned* are taken on board the man of war, and turned before the mast. Melancholy prospect, worst of slavery, *to fight for their oppressors!* From that moment (particularly if found to be good seamen) they *are solicited by the officers as well as men to enter*, they are *tempted* by assurance of "leave to go on shore when in port with the liberty men."* Some months elapse in this way; "no morning sun shines for them," all is gloom, horror, slavery! To escape appears impossible! At length they listen to the seductive *hope of opportunity to regain their liberty by entering, despair whispers it is the only chance!* The bounty is taken! but double disappointment follows; the ship goes into port, and they find themselves more strictly watched! Still upborne by the hope of freedom (for men that deserve it never despair) they preserve a miserable existence, till at length the glorious day arrives, and one of them escapes! Wages, prize money, and oppression, are left behind; his friends and his country receive him again! Having witnessed the escape of a man who had been *ten years* in one of those dens of slaves, I would paint his joy, describe the expressions of his fears and his feelings, if it were possible, but it is not in the power of language. Who then can describe the sufferings of his companion left behind? Still compelled to drag the galling chain, and fight for his tyrants, he also attempts to desert, but is retaken! *The rules of that navy which is supported by conscription, by depriving foreigners as well as natives of their liberty,* are not less cruel in the punishments they inflict. He is tried, found guilty, and FLOGGED THROUGH THE FLEET!

GHOST OF MONTGOMERY

From Notes, while in Barbadoes Court in V. Admiralty.

*A certain number, who, it is supposed, can be relied on, are allowed each day, or at least every Sunday, to go ashore.

National Intelligencer, 10 Mar. 1812, p. 3.

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"IMPRESSED SEAMEN.
No. II."

Mr. Gales,

The picture in my last may have given some idea of the sufferings to which our Poor Tars are reduced when taken into slavery; hearing it asserted that it was "too highly drawn" and that "it seldom happened," I found the observations fell from an Englishman, to whom I was able to state, from perfect knowlege, that owing to the interference of a gentleman of Philadelphia, a very respectable young man of Boston, who deserted from the *Acasta* British frigate at La Guyra, was saved from this worse than death. Of that remonstrance it is believed a copy is in the hands of government.

Is it of any consequence, how many may have suffered this-what shall I call it? let every man who has feeling, or a friend-every father who has a son-mothers, sisters! name it! Is it not enough to know *that one has suffered?* and what nation has inflicted this unmerited, this _______ punishment! *the only power on earth, that has by her own law declared the right of foreigners, the subjects and citizens of every other nation under Heaven, by service only, to equal privilege with her own native subjects** Who has *by law* provided, that if one of her subjects becomes a citizen of the U.States, he shall *never re-assume his rights of allegiance.* + By Lord Hawkesbury's act (as it is called) when taking out a register for a vessel in England, the owner is to swear, he "has never taken the oath of allegiance to any foreign power, prince or state, *except to a power in Europe* to obtain the rights of a burgher or citizen." This act of Parliament *for excusing perjury*, in those who shielded British vessels *under the Imperial flag at Ostend* (then a free port) is equally a declaration of their morality and their present consistency. Who can think without shuddering, without horror; *of an innocent man, whose only offence is his profession*, being carried in a boat with a *gallows suspended over his head*, from ship to ship, his hands tied up to the cross bar, and along side of every one hearing a mock sentence read# and then imagine him whipped with a "cat o' nine tails" 'till the blood trickles down his manly back! fancy! no it is not fancy, for it has been repeated! repeated! repeated! 'till his giant independent spirit burst indignant from its prison and left the galling cords which bound his fettered body.

When on some occasion an Englishman had his ears unjustly cut off by the Spaniards, the British Parliament was applied to for redress-the sufferer being brought before the House, with a handkerchief on his head to hide his disgrace, was asked, "when the act was done, when you were thus treated, what did you think?" He replied: "at that moment I expected to die; I prayed to my God for pardon of my sins, and relied on my country for revenge."

GHOST OF MONTGOMERY.

From notes while in the Court of Vice Admiralty at Malta.

* *Blackstone.*

+ *He cannot again even own a British ship.*

# *Can an American deserter from a British man of war be tried by his peers, or by his officers?*

National Intelligencer, 14 Mar. 1812, p. 3.

"IMPRESSED SEAMEN.
No. III."

Mr. Gales,

Having in every British port had feeling excited, and reflections called forth on the melancholy exhibition and sufferings of my much wronged fellow-citizens, *confined on board their floating galleys*, I was induced to enquire into other effects of this *system of oppression*, exercised by a nation claiming pre-eminence in Europe for justice, and to make an estimate of the pecuniary aid her navy received from this atrocious mode of maintaining it, by a calculation of the amount due to *American seamen for wages and prize money*, who having been impressed had already deserted (whether before or after being forced or induced to enter,) and from the best information which could be obtained in England, it may exceed 350,000 dollars!

Convinced by those unvarnished facts, methinks I hear my tortured countrymen exclaim, where is the cure? It is certainly much more easy to point out grievances than remedies-but who can doubt our having the means of redress? Some years since the ship _______ was boarded by the British frigate _______ commanded by a sprig of nobility: the

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second mate and carpenter, both *legal citizens*, were by his order impressed, notwithstanding very strong remonstrances; at length the owner of the ship they were taken from spoke to them in the boat:–"*touch not a rope in that frigate–remember you are freemen, maintain your rights or perish.*" They behaved like men, and were successful. The boatswain was ordered to set them to duty: they refused: he threatened–they replied, "*do not lift your hand!*" "*we will never do duty in this ship*"–they were sent to the quarter deck: the captain asked them a few questions, and ordered them to be flogged; they told him with looks (of which he could not doubt the sincerity,) "if we receive *one blow, this ship, nor any other British ship, shall contain us, if gun-powder be on board.*" They were put aboard a sloop the next day and sent to Jamaica, where they rejoined their own ship. He knew that in the hour of action those men could not wish for victory, but would endeavor to get revenge; they had known freedom, and who that estimates its value will survive the loss of it? Desertion, mutiny, & gun-powder are the weapons of freemen kept in slavery.

The object of war is peace–ours, justice, indemnity for the past and assurance of respect for the future–to obtain which at the least possible expence of blood and treasure is to blend humanity with policy and wisdom–if then we are compelled to the dire alternative of war, provisions should be made *for the heirs of those who thus die martyrs for their country.*

GHOST OF MONTGOMERY.

High Court of Admiralty of England.

National Intelligencer, 17 Mar. 1812, p. 3.

"IMPRESSED SEAMEN.
No. V."

Again 'tis said, the gentlemen of fine feelings are shocked at the suggestions of mutiny. What, says one, excite men to murder their officers! too bad–that's too bad! How many of those men-stealers, said another in reply, are to be placed in competition with 500 or a thousand of our best citizens, who would be opposed in the batteries to the ruffian attempts to destroy, to Copenhagen our sea-ports, our citizens, our happiness and peace?[1]

It is now time to suggest some other preventatives to this diabolical traffic, this stealing our men, and, with our men, stealing our property! The following measures are proposed:

To declare any citizen of the United States who should kill any man attempting to impress him, innocent; and that, if tried and punished by decision of any foreign tribunal, the same should be immediately retaliated on any subject selected by the heirs or next of kin to the person so punished.

To prohibit *forever* the admission of any vessel of war, on board which any citizen of the U. States should be impressed.

To authorise the imprisonment of any subject, to be selected by the next of kin in the U. States, for an equal length of time, day for day, *upon equal rations*-but as such subject would not earn his rations in confinement, not to be liberated till the said rations be paid for.

To authorize attaching any money due to British subjects in the U. States for wages at the rate of $ 60 per month, and for all prize money, when they cannot desert. Kindred to attach for damages for false imprisonment, at the rate of $ 10 per day-the books in England to be examined by commission, and, if refused, the oaths of the party to be evidence.

To proscribe the captain and every commissioned and warrant officer on board any vessel impressing a citizen of the U. States till seven years after a general peace; if caught on shore to be tried, and, when found guilty, tarred and feathered, one, two or three days for every such offence, according to the circumstances*-their names can always be known by Steele's list.

Whereas it frequently happens, that when citizens of the United States are impressed and forcibly taken, their protections are not only torn up and destroyed, but the men prevented the use of pen and ink, be it provided, that in every and each of such cases all vessels of that nation be forthwith prohibited & excluded the ports and waters of the United States, and to continue excluded for the full term of one year after the liberation of the individual so impressed.

GHOST OF MONTGOMERY.

High Court of Admiralty of England.

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**This mild mode of punishment had a most salutory effect at the commencement of the revolution, and would be equally useful in this case.*

National Intelligencer, 24 Mar. 1812, p. 2. The article "Impressed Seamen, No. IV," has been deliberately omitted here.

1. In order to frustrate the aims of the Armed Neutrality, by which Russia, Prussia, Denmark, and Sweden sought to exempt from search neutral merchantmen under convoy, a British fleet entered the Baltic Sea in 1801 and on 1 Apr. attacked and defeated a Danish fleet in the Battle of Copenhagen.

New England Federalists Consider the Prospect of War

Interest and ideology produced the virulent opposition of New England's Federalists to the foreign policy of the administrations of Jefferson and Madison. For New England's Federalists, the contest with the Jeffersonian Republicans would determine the future character of the United States: if ruled by propertied, virtuous, hard-working, Christian gentlemen, America would prosper as a virtuous, God-fearing, civilized and cultured republic; but Republicans, with their affinity for Jacobinism and atheism, devilish ideologies spawned in the French Revolution, would lead the country to mob rule, violence, and economic collapse. New England's Federalists considered the Southern democrat, a hypocrite who spouted egalitarian phrases while owning slaves and who was made ignorant, idle and decadent by slaveholding, to be the paradigm of the Jeffersonian Republican. Corrupt politicians who toadied to the vulgar mob, the Republican administrations seemed bent on sacrificing the country's true interests to their own party's benefit.[1]

Weak nationally, having fought a losing battle with Jeffersonian Republicans for a decade, New England's Federalists found it increasingly difficult to view politics from a national perspective. The actions of the Republican administrations appeared to be designed purposefully to destroy New England's economy. Maritime enterprise, commerce, whaling, fishing, and all the ancillary pursuits of shipbuilding and outfitting, constituted the region's principal industry.

Flourishing neutral trade during the resurgence of the Napoleonic Wars after 1803 had greatly profitted New England. Jefferson's system of economic coercion, the Embargo Act, the Non-Importation Act, and Macon's Bill No. 2, interfered with that trade. The embargo of 1807–1809 not only brought merchants to bankruptcy, but affected every other part of the economy: it threw seamen and laborers out of work, impoverished farmers, who could not market their produce abroad, and inflated the price of imported goods. Next to this distress, impressment and orders in council, with the inconveniences they caused, paled into issues little worth a war.[2]

To risk war with Great Britain seemed folly. The Royal Navy, no doubt, would soon blockade America's ports, raid her coasts, and seize her shipping. War would bring about New England's economic collapse. If war must come, the enemy should be France, not England. Internationally, Napoleon embodied the threat to liberty, property, and good order represented in America by the Francophile Republicans. In this context, to attack England, the only effective opponent to the tyrant, would be morally heinous.

Shortly after President Madison proclaimed a 90-day embargo, which most interpreted as a prologue to war, the Federal-Republicans of Providence, Rhode Island, expressed their reactions and anxieties, reflecting those of other parts of New England, in the resolves which follow. When, afterwards, the United States declared war against Great Britain, the town of Providence would toll bells and lower flags to half-mast in protest, the Rhode Island General Assembly would denounce the declaration, and the governor would resist use of the state's militia outside its borders.[3]

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[1] *Linda K. Kerber,* Federalists in Dissent: Imagery and Ideology in Jeffersonian America *(Ithaca and London, 1970), esp. pp. 23-66, 173, 215.*

[2] *Samuel Eliot Morison,* Harrison Gray Otis: The Urbane Federalist *(Boston, 1969), pp. 298-300, 327.*

[3] *Irving B. Richman,* Rhode Island: A Study in Separatism *(Boston and New York, 1905), pp. 275-76.*

"PROVIDENCE RESOLUTIONS"

[Extract] Providence, April 7.

. . . Voted and Resolved unanimously,

That, in our opinion, the peace, prosperity and happiness of these United States, are in great jeopardy; inasmuch as, we have the

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strongest reasons to believe, the general government have determined to make war on Great-Britain; This we believe,

Because Congress have voted to raise twenty-five thousand men in addition to the present standing army; to receive the services of fifty thousand volunteers; and to draft one hundred thousand militia: . . .

We are further confirmed in our apprehensions of the determination of government to engage in this war, by the evident partiality they have for a long time manifested towards one of the belligerents; and their deep-rooted enmity towards the other. The decrees of both nations equally violate our neutral rights; but France by her Berlin Decree, was the first aggressor; and still persists in capturing and burning our vessels on the high seas; and in robbing, imprisoning, and insulting our citizens; yet all these atrocities have been either palliated, or excused; while every effort has been made to excite the prejudices and animosities of the people against Great Britain. British vessels are excluded from our harbors; and our citizens are forbidden to import goods of the growth and manufacture of Britain and her dependencies; at the same time that French privateers are suffered to refit in American ports; and French goods are received, and protected, by our government.

At this very moment valuable vessels and cargoes, lying at our wharves, the property of our neighbors and fellow-citizens, are seized, detained, and libelled for condemnation; because the agents of government suspect these cargoes of rum, sugar, and molasses, though purchased, and shipped, at Spanish or Swedish ports, were raised on British plantations. ——— All this, too, is done, when our trade to France, is of little value; and that to England, and her dependence is, of more importance, to the United States, than with all the world besides.

Resolved, That, although we would, with our lives and fortunes, support our government in the prosecution of a war against any nation, rendered necessary, for defence of the UNION, honour, or interest, of these States; yet, believing as we most sincerely do, that a war with England, at this time, is neither necessary, nor expedient, we deem it a duty which we owe to our families, and to our country, to use our utmost efforts to avert so great a calamity; and being fully convinced, that nothing will check, or retard government, in their inconsiderate career towards war with Britain, unless it be the voice of the people, loudly, unequivocally, and constitutionally, expressing their disapprobation of these measures, we are of opinion that this expression ought to be given in the approaching elections. If we choose Democratic State Rulers, we choose war; if we choose Federal State Rulers, we choose peace ______ For this voice of the people, the general government now stand listening. . . .

But should we, forgetful of our duty, elect democratic rulers, and thereby let loose this wild spirit of war, what calamities, and horrors must spread themselves over those devoted States! All the taxes proposed must fall upon us; our foreign and coasting commerce be cut off; our fisheries be destroyed; our agriculture neglected; for our young men, who now till the fields, must enlist, or be drafted, like French conscripts, for the army to conquer Canada, or perish before Montreal and Quebec. The destruction of our navigation would interrupt, and we fear, ruin our numerous, and flourishing manufactories; for, when the enemies ships cover our coasts, we can neither obtain the necessary materials, nor export the manufactured goods.

But these evils are only the beginning of sorrows. When war arrives, what will give protections to our harbours and maritime towns? Can we expect it from our Gun-Boats? We must not look for our enemy here on land, with a regular army; for they still recollect their numerous defeats, in that species of battle, during our revolutionary contest. They will therefore, make a war of frequent, and sudden descent on our long, and defenceless sea-coast. Ships manned, and now moored on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean, can, in forty days, be riding on the waters of our bay and river. What could then save our sea-port towns, together with all the vessels in our harbours from conflagration, pillage, and military exaction? We are now without protection; and while that part of the militia, not drafted and sent to the war in Canada, would be assembling, the hand of ruin would pass over the land; and the enemy, laden with our spoil, leave us with our houseless wives and children, amidst the smoking fragments of our habitations.

Dreadful are these consequences of war; but more dreadful will await us. A war with England will bring us into alliance with France. This alliance would make the last page of our history as a nation. All the horrors of war might be endured; but who can endure to become a Slave?-If we are allied to that putrid pestilence of tyranny; our laws, freedom, independence, national name and glory, are blotted out from the memory of man-If Bonaparte sends to this country, ships, and French soldiers, and French generals, we shall soon be like

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Holland, and Italy, and Switzerland, and every other country where this scourge of nations has been permitted to set his foot.

Resolved, therefore, that, inasmuch as our government seem determined to plunge the country into a war, unless deterred therefrom by the warning voice of the people, loudly remonstrating against this measure, in the approaching elections, we will use all fair, and honourable means, to procure the election of the citizens named in the American Prox; because we know them to be men of fair fame, and pure integrity; friends to peace; friends to their country, to its union, commerce, agriculture, manufactures, mechanic arts, laws, liberties, institutions and national independence. We will oppose the election of the citizens named in the Democratic Prox; because we know they are the friends of an administration which advocates War, Excise, Stamp Acts, Land Taxes, and of consequence, national debts and national poverty. We moreover invite considerate men of all parties to examine and see if these things be not so; and to join with us in one great and patriotic effort to preserve the peace, and if possible, restore the prosperity of our common country.

MOSES LIPPITT, *Chairman*
THOMAS BURGESS, *Secretary*

Newport Mercury, 11 Apr. 1812, pp. 1-2.

Shall It Be Peace or War?

For almost two months, from the beginning of April until late May of 1812, the nation argued whether war should be declared. President Madison's embargo was intended to serve notice on American citizens and foreign statesmen alike that severe measures were being considered. Men who committed themselves to war one day often reversed themselves on the next. This vacillation reached into the highest levels of government. President Madison and his cabinet still felt there was some chance of a British change of position on American grievances. Sloop of war Hornet, *Master Commandant James Lawrence, had sailed for Europe in December 1811, with dispatches and news that the United States was preparing for war. Her return was anxiously awaited as she might bring news that would avert a declaration of war.*

When Hornet *returned on 22 May, anticipation turned to gloom and anger in Washington when people learned she brought no news favorable to peace. The French had been asked to cease harassment of American ships. Had they acceded, the way might have been paved for a reconciliation with Britain. Foreign Minister Castlereagh's instructions to Foster, however, showed the cabinet's intransigence on the issue of Orders in Council. Castlereagh rigidly placed the blame on France for failing to repeal the Berlin and Milan Decrees. President Madison then proceeded as if there were no alternative but to submit a war message to Congress.*

In asking for congressional deliberations on the choice between peace and war, Madison delivered a masterful summary of American grievances against Great Britain, leaving clear his own position. After intense debate, the House of Representatives gave its approval by a vote of 79 to 49, and the Senate passed the bill by a much narrower margin, 17 to 13. The core of the group voting for war consisted of men from the Middle and Southeastern States, from Pennsylvania to Georgia. Federalists and anti-Madisonian Republicans from New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, Rhode Island, and Massachusetts provided the bulk of the anti-war votes. President Madison signed the Declaration of War on 18 June 1812. Ironically, Britain had, too late, already repealed the Orders in Council. Had this news been received earlier a pivotal cause of war would have been eliminated, and it is very likely that Congress would have rejected the war bill.

President James Madison to Congress, 1 June 1812

To the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States.

I communicate to Congress certain Documents, being a continuation of those heretofore laid before them, on the subject of our affairs with Great Britain.

Without going back beyond the renewal in 1803, of the war in which Great Britain is engaged, and omitting unrepaired wrongs of inferior magnitude, the conduct of her Government presents a series of acts, hostile to the United States as an Independent and neutral nation.

British Cruisers have been in the continued practice of violating the American flag on the great high way of nations, and of seizing and carrying off persons sailing under it; not in the exercise of a Belligerent right, founded on the Law of Nations against an Enemy, but of a

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municipal prerogative over British subjects. British jurisdiction is thus extended to neutral vessels, in a situation where no laws can operate but the law of nations, and the laws of the Country to which the vessels belong; and a self-redress is assumed, which, if British subjects were wrongfully detained and alone concerned. is that substitution of force, for a resort to the responsible sovereign, which falls within the definition of War. Could the seizure of British subjects, in such cases, be regarded as within the exercise of a Belligerent right, the acknowledged laws of war, which forbid an article of captured property to be adjudged, without a regular investigation before a competent Tribunal, would imperiously demand the fairest trial, where the sacred rights of persons were at issue. In place of such a trial, these rights are subjected to the will of every petty commander.

The practice, hence, is so far from affecting British subjects alone, that under the pretext of searching for these, thousands of American citizens, under the safeguard of public law, and of their national flag, have been torn from their Country, and from every thing dear to them; have been dragged on board Ships of War of a foreign nation; and exposed, under the severities of their discipline, to be exiled to the most distant and deadly climes, to risk their lives in the battles of their oppressors, and to be the melancholy instruments of taking away those of their own brethren.

Against this crying enormity, which Great Britain would be so prompt to avenge if committed against herself, the United States have in vain exhausted remonstrances and expostulations. And that no proof might be wanting of their conciliatory dispositions, and no pretext left for a continuance of the practice, the British Government was formally assured of the readiness of the United States to enter into arrangements such as could not be rejected, if the recovery of British subjects were the real and the sole object. The communication passed without effect.

British cruisers have been in the practice also of violating the rights and the peace of our Coasts. They hover over and harrass our entering and departing Commerce. To the most insulting pretentions they have added the most lawless proceedings in our very harbors; and have wantonly spilt american blood within the sanctuary of our territorial jurisdiction. The principles and rules enforced by that nation when a neutral nation, against armed vessels of Belligerents hovering near her coasts, and disturbing her commerce, are well known. When called on, nevertheless by the United States, to punish the greater offences committed by her own vessels, her Government has bestowed on their commanders, additional marks of honor and confidence.

Under pretended blockades, without the presence of an adequate force, and sometimes without the practicability of applying one, our commerce has been plundered in every Sea; the great staples of our country have been cut off from their legitimate markets; and a distructive blow aimed at our agricultural and maritime interests. In aggrivation of these predatory measures, they have been considered as in force from the dates of their notification; a retrospective effect being thus added, as has been done in other important cases, to the unlawfulness of the course pursued. And to render the outrage the more signal, these mock blockades, have been reiterated and enforced in the face of official communications from the British Government, declaring, as the true definition of a legal blockade "that particular ports must be actually invested, and previous warning given to vessels bound to them, not to enter."

Not content with these occasional expedients for laying waste our neutral trade, the Cabinet of Great Britain resorted, at length, to the sweeping system of Blockades, under the name of Orders in Council; which has been moulded and managed, as might best suit its political views, its commercial jealouses, or the avidity of British Cruisers.

To our remonstrances against the complicated and transcendent injustice of this innovation, the first reply was, that the orders were reluctantly adopted by Great Britain, as a necessary retaliation on decrees of her Enemy proclaiming a general blockade of the British Isles, at a time when the naval force of that Enemy dared not to issue from his own ports. She was reminded, without effect, that her own prior blockades, unsupported by an adequate naval force actually applied and continued, were a bar to this plea: that executed Edicts against millions of our property, could not be retaliation on Edicts, confessedly impossible to be executed: that retaliation to be just, should fall on the party setting the guilty example, not on an innocent party, which was not even chargeable with an acquiescence in it.

When deprived of this flimsy veil for a prohibition of our trade with her enemy, by the repeal of his prohibition of our trade with Great Britain, her Cabinet, instead of a corresponding repeal, or a practical discontinuance of its orders, formally avowed a determination to persist in them against the United States, until the markets of her enemy should be laid open to British products; thus asserting an

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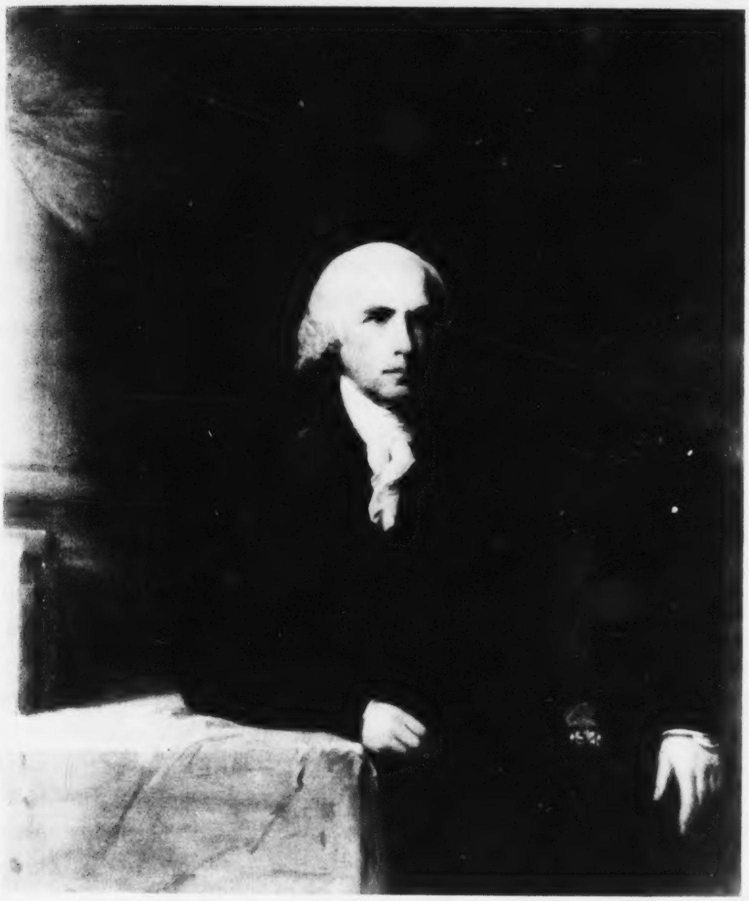
obligation on a neutral power to require one Belligerent to encourage, by its internal regulations, the trade of another belligerant; contradicting her own practice towards all nations, in peace as well as in war; and betraying the insincerity of those professions which inculcated a belief, that having resorted to her orders with regret, She was anxious to find an occasion for putting an end to them.

Abandoning still more, all respect for the neutral rights of the United States, and for its own consistency, the British Government now demands, as prerequisites to a repeal of its Orders, as they relate to the United States, that a formality should be observed in the repeal of the French Decrees, nowise necessary to their termination, nor exemplified by British usage; and that the French repeal, besides including that portion of the Decrees which operate within a territorial jurisdiction, as well as that which operates on the high seas, against the commerce of the United States, should not be a single and special repeal in relation to the United States, but should be extended to whatever other neutral nations, unconnected with them, may be affected by those Decrees. And as an additional insult, they are called on for a formal disavowal of conditions and pretentions advanced by the French Government for which the United States are so far from having made themselves responsible; that in official explanations, which have been published to the world, and in a correspondence of the American Minister at London with the British Minister for foreign affairs, such a responsibility was explicitly and emphatically disclaimed.

It has become indeed sufficiently certain, that the commerce of the United States, is to be sacrificed, not as interfering with the Belligerent rights of Great Britain; not as supplying the wants of her Enemies, which she herself supplies; but as interfering with the monopoly which she covets for her own commerce and navigation. She carries on a war against the lawful commerce of a friend, that she may the better carry on a commerce with an Enemy; a commerce polluted by the forgeries and perjuries, which are for the most part, the only passports by which it can succeed.

Anxious to make every experiment, short of the last resort of injured nations, the United States have withheld from Great Britain, under successive modifications, the benefits of a free intercourse with their market; the loss of which could not but outweigh the profits accruing from her restrictions of our commerce, with other nations. And to entitle these experiments to the more favorable consideration,



President James Madison

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they were so framed as to enable her to place her adversary, under the exclusive operation of them. To these appeals her Government has been equally inflexible, as if willing to make sacrifices of every sort, rather than yield to the claims of justice, or renounce the errors of a false pride. Nay, so far were the attempts carried, to overcome the attachment of the British Cabinet to its unjust Edicts, that it received every encouragement, within the competency of the Executive branch of our Government, to expect that a repeal of them would be followed by a war between the United States and France, unless the French Edicts should also be repealed. Even this communication, although silencing for ever, the plea of a disposition in the United States to acquiesce in those Edicts, originally the sole plea for them, received no attention.

If no other proof existed of a predetermination of the British Government against a repeal of its orders, it might be found in the correspondence of the Minister Plenipotentiary of the United States at London and the British Secretary for foreign affairs, in 1810, on the question whether the Blockade of May 1806 was considered as in force, or as not in force. It had been ascertained that the French Government, which urged this Blockade as the ground of its Berlin Decree, was willing, in the event of its removal, to repeal that Decree; which being followed by alternate repeals of the other offensive Edicts, might abolish the whole system on both sides. This inviting opportunity for accomplishing an object so important to the United States, and professed so often to be the desire of both the Belligerents, was made known to the British Government. As that Government admits that an actual application of an adequate force, is necessary to the existence of a legal Blockade, and it was notorious, that if such a force had ever been applied, its long discontinuance had annulled the Blockade in question, there could be no sufficient objection on the part of Great Britain to a formal revocation of it; and no imaginable objection to a declaration of the fact, that the Blockade did not exist. The declaration would have been consistent with her avowed principles of Blockade; and would have enabled the United States to demand from France the pledged repeal of her decree; either with success, in which case the way would have been opened for a general repeal of the Belligerent Edicts; or without success, in which case the United States would have been justified in turning their measures exclusively against France. The British Government would, however, neither rescind the Blockade; nor declare its non-existence, nor permit its non-existence to be inferred and affirmed by the American Plenipotentiary. On the contrary, by representing the Blockade to be comprehended in the Orders in Council, the United States were compelled so to regard it, in their subsequent proceedings.

There was a period when a favorable change in the policy of the British Cabinet, was justly considered as established. The Minister Plenipotentiary of His Britanic Majesty here, proposed an adjustment of the differences more immediately endangering the harmony of the two Countries. The proposition was accepted with the promptitude and cordiality, corresponding with the invariable professions of this Government. A foundation appeared to be laid for a sincere and lasting reconciliation. The prospect, however, quickly vanished. The whole proceeding was disavowed by the British Government without any explanations, which could, at that time, repress the belief, that the disavowal proceeded from a spirit of hostility to the commercial rights and prosperity of the United States. And it has since come into proof, that at the very moment, when the public Minister was holding the language of friendship, and inspiring confidence in the sincerity of the negociation with which he was charged, a secret agent of his Government was employed in intrigues, having for their object, a subversion of our Government, and a dismemberment of our happy union.

In reviewing the conduct of Great Britain towards the United States, our attention is necessarily drawn to the warfare, just renewed by the savages, on one of our extensive frontiers; a warfare, which is known to spare neither age nor sex, and to be distinguished by features peculiarly shocking to humanity. It is difficult to account for the activity and combinations which have for some time been developing themselves among tribes in constant intercourse with British traders and Garrisons, without connecting their hostility with that influence; and without recollecting the authenticated examples of such interpositions, heretofore furnished by the officers and agents of that Government.

Such is the spectacle of injuries and indignities, which have been heaped on our Country; and such the crisis which its unexampled forbearance and conciliatory efforts, have not been able to avert. It might, at least have been expected, that an enlightened nation, if less urged by moral obligations, or invited by friendly dispositions on the part of the United States, would have found, in its true interest alone, a sufficient motive to respect their rights and their tranquility on the

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high seas; that an enlarged policy would have favored that free and general circulation of commerce in which the British nation is at all times interested, and which in times of war, is the best alleviation of its calamities to herself, as well as to other Belligerents; and, more especially, that the British Cabinet, would not, for the sake of a precarious and surreptitious intercourse with hostile markets, have persevered in a course of measures, which necessarily put at hazard the invaluable market of a great and growing Country, disposed to cultivate the mutual advantages of an active commerce.

Other Councils have prevailed. Our moderation and conciliation, have had no other effect than to encourage perseverance, and to enlarge pretentions. We behold our seafaring Citizens still the daily victims of lawless violence, committed on the great common and high way of nations, even within sight of the Country which owes them protection. We behold our vessels, freighted with the products of our soil and industry, or returning with the honest proceeds of them, wrested from their lawful destinations, confiscated by prize courts, no longer the organs of public Law, but the instruments of arbitrary Edicts; and their unfortunate crews dispersed and lost, or forced or inveigled in British ports, into British fleets: Whilst arguments are employed, in support of these aggressions, which have no foundation but in a principle, equally supporting a claim to regulate our external commerce, in all cases whatsoever.

We behold, in fine, on the side of Great Britain, a state of war against the United States; and on the side of the United States, a state of peace towards Great Britain

Whether the United States shall continue passive under these progressive usurpations, and these accumulating wrongs; or, opposing force to force in defence of their national rights, shall commit a just cause into the hands of the Almighty disposer of events; avoiding all connections which might entangle it in the contests or views of other powers, and preserving a constant readiness to concur in an honourable re-establishment of peace and friendship, is a solemn question, which the Constitution wisely confides to the Legislative Department of the Government. In recommending it to their early deliberations, I am happy in the assurance, that the decision will be worthy the enlightened and patriotic councils, of a virtuous, a free, and a powerful Nation.

Having presented this view of the relations of the United States with Great Britain, and of the solemn alternative growing out of them, I proceed to remark that the communications last made to Congress on the subject of our relations with France, will have shown, that since the revocation of her Decrees, as they violated the neutral rights of the United States, her Government has authorized illegal captures, by its privateers and public ships; and that other outrages have been practiced on our vessels and our Citizens. It will have been seen also, that no indemnity had been provided, or satisfactorily pledged, for the extensive spoliations, committed under the violent and retrospective orders of the French Government against the property of our Citizens, seized within the jurisdiction of France. I abstain at this time, from recommending to the consideration of Congress definitive measures with respect to that nation, in the expectation, that the result of unclosed discussions between our Minister Plenipotentiary at Paris and the French Government, will speedily enable Congress to decide, with greater advantage, on the course due to the rights, the interests, and the honor of our Country.

James Madison

Washington June 1st 1812

DS, DNA, RG46, RS, 12th Congress, Messages of the President (SEN 12A-E2).

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Chapter Two
Naval Operations in the Atlantic Theater: January–August 1812

From 4 April, when President Madison approved the 90-day embargo, until 18 June, when Congress declared war against Great Britain, American naval officers prepared their ships and stations for war as best they could. It was no secret that the embargo was a measure preparatory to a possible outbreak of war. Likewise, Royal Navy ships on the North Atlantic station were put on alert. After Congress passed legislation in February intending to strengthen the armed forces, Wasp *carried that news to England. On 9 May, the British Foreign Office passed a war warning to the Admiralty which in turn advised Vice Admiral Herbert Sawyer at Halifax that war with the United States was a distinct possibility. He was instructed to await notification from the British minister in Washington before commencing hostilities.*[1]

At the outset of the war, the United States Navy had 16 ships in commission, excluding gunboats. These ostensibly faced a huge British Navy that included 600 warships of all types, actively employed, not counting 250 ships under construction and refitting. Yet the Admiralty had only stationed a handful of warships along the North American coast because of worldwide demands on her naval resources. The ongoing war against Napoleonic France and her allies required deployment of British ships to protect communications in the English Channel and the North Sea, at Gibraltar and off French ports in the Mediterranean, and on convoy to the Caribbean and the Indian Ocean. The North American station was defended by one ship of the line, H.M.S. Africa, *64 guns, and two dozen smaller ships, mainly frigates and ships of less force. These were scattered between Halifax and Bermuda.*

Navy Secretary Paul Hamilton and the four clerks who were his administrative staff in Washington, suddenly faced a crushing burden of work, issuing orders, authorizing expenditures, and providing

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logistical support to ship commanders and navy yards all along the Atlantic coast. As increased demands were placed upon senior officers in various stations, they in turn responded, indicating desperate shortages of men and materiel and incomplete states of readiness for most of the ships and gunboats under their command. To complicate matters further, in March U.S. naval gunboats had become involved in clandestine invasion of Spanish territory in East Florida.

The new navy was only partially prepared for war by mid-June 1812, especially at southern stations such as Wilmington and Charleston, but the cruising squadrons were at sea and ready to meet ships of at least equal strength. The first months of the war for the U.S. Navy were marked by many more successes than defeats in the Atlantic Theater. These events provided the public with a welcome antidote to the bitter disappointments resulting from reversals of American military forces in the northwest from Detroit to Niagara.

1. See Reginald Horsman, The War of 1812 *(New York, 1969), p. 56, and Perkins,* Prologue to War, *p. 321.*

The St. Marys Station

The deployment of U.S. naval vessels at the commencement of the War of 1812 was complicated in some degree by American foreign policy commitments on the Georgia-Spanish East Florida border. From 18 November 1811, the officer in charge of naval forces in Georgia was Captain Hugh G. Campbell.[1] *He was stationed on the St. Marys River which divided the United States from East Florida. The rivers, shallow bays, and sounds of the Georgia-Florida coast were well-suited to gunboats sent there to enforce the embargo laws. Florida was a popular haven for all kinds of smugglers, including the outlawed slave traders. Ships from Great Britain and Spain frequently put in at Fernandina on Amelia Island and at St. Augustine farther down the coast. Their presence created a delicate situation.*

Captain Campbell's responsibilities suddenly increased in February 1812, when some American residents of St. Marys, supported by volunteers from the Georgia Militia, raised rebellion against Spanish rule. The uprising had been brewing for some time, tacitly supported by Congress and the Madison administration. A portion of West Florida had been acquired by a bloodless coup in 1810, and it was hoped that East Florida might fall to the United States in the same *manner. The rebellion was planned by George Mathews, a former governor of Georgia and brigadier general in the Georgia State Militia. Mathews had consulted with President Madison on the matter and he was authorized to call upon U.S. military and naval forces, if necessary, to attain his objective.*[2]

The Navy Department had not sent Captain Campbell explicit orders to cooperate with General Mathews. As a result, he was not comfortable with Mathews's requests for naval support, as demonstrated in the following and several subsequent documents. Campbell's primary concern during the early days of his assignment had been the shortage of schooners and brigs to reinforce the gunboats under his command. His predicament in this regard was similar to that of commanders on the New Orleans station.[3] *The need for additional vessels, men, and equipment at St. Marys strained the meager resources of the navy at Charleston and Wilmington. The reports of Captain John Dent and Sailing Master Thomas Gautier reflect the situation.*[4]

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[1] *Hamilton to Campbell, 18 Nov. 1811, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 9, No. 507.*

[2] *James Cooper,* Secret Acts, resolutions and instructions under which East Florida was invaded by the United States troops, naval forces, and volunteers, in 1812 and 1813; together with the official correspondence of the agents and officers of the government *(Washington, D.C., 1860). See also Julius Pratt,* Expansionists of 1812 *(New York, 1925; reprinted 1949 and 1957), pp. 60–125, 189–274; and Patrick,* Florida Fiasco.

[3] *Shaw to Hamilton, 17 Feb. 1812, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 1, No. 43.*

[4] *See pp. 98–103.*

CAPTAIN HUGH G. CAMPBELL TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

St. Marys Jany 11. 1812

Sir

My last respects to you suggested the propriety of ordering three more Gun Boats to this Station, likewise an additional small vessel to act along the coast and Correct abuses that may take Place beyond the reach of Gun Boats, for instance Vessels sailing from Amelia and taking Advantage of Spanish Waters and a fresh breeze untill over the Bar, when it would be Dangerous for Gun Boats to follow them.

Mr [Abraham] Bessent Collector of this Port has Given me a discription of two vessels now lading in the spanish waters. his information is so Correct, that I feel myself Justified in ordering their seizure should opportunity bring Them in our way. I intend with the Assistence of Lieut Gadsden or others, to take a sketch of this river from the North

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Breaker to St Mary's and make such Remarks as may prove useful To the service. I beg Sir, that a few signal Books may be sent on likewise the Six additional Midshipmen. since my last respects Doctor Daindridge [William A. *Dandridge*] has appeard as Surgeon In the Navy. I believe Sir, I have given all The Particulars of our Situation here-and shall In future confine myself to a monthly report, Unless Circumstances require it otherwise. I have the Honour to be [&c.]

Hugh G Campbell

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 1, No. 7.

The Capture of Fernandina

At the end of February 1812, Captain Campbell was drawn into a planned rebellion of United States citizens who lived in East Florida. General Mathews had worked openly to obtain cooperation of military and naval commanders on the scene. Campbell's gunboats and their crews became an element crucial to the project, but he was uncertain whether the Navy Department would approve of his participation. Lacking specific orders, Campbell reluctantly decided to support Mathews's uprising. Aided by navy gunboats, the rebels successfully forced the surrender of the Spanish-controlled town of Fernandina on Amelia Island. According to the testimony of Winslow Foster, former Sailing Master, USN, and commander of Gunboat No. 62, *Captain Campbell later requested the return of the written orders he had issued.*[1] *No copies of these orders have survived.*

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[1] *U.S. Senate, 36th Congress, 1st Session, Miscellaneous Documents, No. 55, Supreme Court of the United States vs. Francis P. Ferreira, Administrator of Francis Pass, Deceased, "Testimony of Captain Winslow Foster" (a deposition taken in November 1846).*

CAPTAIN HUGH G. CAMPBELL TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

St. Marys Feb 29th 1812

Sir,

I beg leave to observe that General Mathews called on me yesterday and inquird if I had received any orders from you, to cooperate with the Military in case their service should be requird in East Florida. I answered in the Negative. He then informed me confidentional, That Circumstances justified the Expectation of a Speedy change in the political affairs of that country and suggested the Expediencey of holding the Naval Force on this station in readiness to act as occasion May require. Although the Naval force at this Place are always held in readiness, and should consider it my duty to cooperate with the Army in any measures requird for the publick Good, I should feel much more Gratified in Being Honourd with Instructions from you On that head. I have the Honour to be [&c.]

Hugh G Campbell

An Embargo breaker made his Escape this Morning from Amelia. he was persued by Gun Boat *62*. but by superior sailing Evaded the Persuit which proved Unavoidable. the *Vixen* being absent on duty. The services of the *Enterprize* is much Required.

H G C

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 1, No. 60.

Captain Hugh G. Campbell to Secretary of the Navy Hamilton

St. Marys March 21. 1812

Sir

My respects to you of the 29th Febr mentioned that General Mathews had called on me and inquird if I had any order to Cooperate with him in his opperations against E Florida and requested the favor of Orders on that head. Since that period General Mathews has made several requisitions on me which Are herewith Enclosed by which you will perceive How far I have acted in doubt and fears. I at First refused to comply with General Mathews requisitions but on his producing Instructions from the President of the United States, Likewise your orders To all Naval Commanders on the New Orleans Station And your letter to himself relative to the Naval force Intended to this station. With my not having orders To the contrary, and considering the orders of the President paramount to all others in this Country I did consent to go certain lengths with General Mathews, impressed with a belief that the Troops of point

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peter were likewise to act-but In this I was at too late an hour disappointed.

Agreable to General Mathews' requisition of the 15th the boats proceeded, and on the Morning of the 17th Inst took their station near the town of Fernandino, in a quite and Friendly Manner, the commanders of those Boats having orders not to fire a shot Unless first fired upon, and previous to The approach of the patriots I gave a positive order not to fire a shot on any patriot whatever. This measure had the desirous Effect of preventing blood blood which would inevitably have been the case with the loss of this town.

Permit me to intreat you Sir to forward me some orders on that head, and be pleased to say if my conduct Is approved, while I console myself that I have acted from the best of Motives. I have the Honour to be [&c.]

Hugh G Campbell

N.B. Although your orders to Naval Commanders did mention E Florida, I took in view that part of G. Mathews Instructions when he is authorised to act by that provision in similar manner to that of West Florida.

H G C

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 1, No. 82.

CAPTAIN HUGH G. CAMPBELL TO SAILING MASTER BARTRAN G. HIPKINS

[St. Marys]
[29 March 1812]

Orders

The Patriots of east Florida having ceeded to the United States the whole of that Province, with the exception of the town and Fortress of St Augustine, which Province is now occupied by the Troops of the United States under the command of Col. [Thomas A.] Smith-I do hereby order and direct that you proceed with all possible dispatch to St Augustine, with Gun Boats *Nos 63*, *62*, and *10*, and anchor within the the Bar, and as near the fort as prudence may direct, taking care not to offend the town or garrison of that place, nor any inhabitant of the same, unless an insult should be offered to the flag of the United States, in such a case you will repel that insult by every means in your power, at the same time assure the spanish subjects, of your friendly intentions to render them that aid their present situation so much require. The United States Troops, near St Augustine, may require some assistance from you, in that case you will communicate with them through the north River, should this be objected by the Governor, it will be your duty to resist such objection, by demanding the privilege of that Navigation, as a part of the Province ceeded to the United States. Be on the alert, guard against surprize, Moore your Boats in the most advantageous situation to support each other in case of necessity. You will likewise render such services as General Mathews may require, make me acquainted with their nature, and of your arrival by the earliest opportunity.

Hugh G Campbell

Mr. B. G Hipkins Comg Gun Boat *No. 63*

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 1, No. 127c.

The East Florida Uprising Restrained

Even as the insurgents moved from Fernandina toward St. Augustine, the United States Government began to reassess its East Florida policy. Fearful of embarrassment, if U.S. involvement were unmasked, President Madison and Secretary of State James Monroe withdrew support for the expedition and disavowed General Mathews as a government agent. This was intended to defuse a volatile situation, avoiding a confrontation with either Spain or England on the disposition of East Florida. U.S. military and naval commanders were ordered to withdraw. Of the two documents that follow, the first contains orders to Captain Campbell in this vein; the second is his reply showing evident relief.

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SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON TO CAPTAIN HUGH G. CAMPBELL

H. G. Campbell Esqr
Comg Naval Officer
St Mary's, Ga. Nav. Depmt 8. April 1812.

Your letter of the 21 ulto with the accompanying papers have been received.

Altho I am persuaded that you cooperated with Genl Matthews, from a conviction in your own mind, that you were acting correctly: Yet the proceedings of Genl Matthews being unauthorised by the President of the United States, are of course disapproved by him. I have it therefore in charge from the President to require of you to withdraw all the forces under your command, from the spanish waters, & you will not in future, cooperate with Genl Matthews.

P. Hamilton

Copy, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 10, p. 12.

CAPTAIN HUGH G. CAMPBELL TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

St Marys April 25th 1812

Sir

By this days mail I am honored with your instructions of the 8th Inst which renders me the happiest of mortals, and relieved me from a state of anxiety that no language of mine can express.

I shall immediately with pride and pleasure carry into effect the orders of our much beloved President by with drawing Myself from General Mathews, and ordering the Gun Boats from the spanish waters. I have the Honor to Be [&c.]

Hugh G Campbell

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 1, No. 147.

Conditions at the Charlestown Navy Yard

In 1801, the Navy Department purchased land at six different locations along the Atlantic coast to serve as places where navy yards could be established: Portsmouth, New Hampshire, Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Washington, and Norfolk.[1] *Provision had also been made for the building of six 74-gun ships at these yards, but these plans were dropped during the administration of President Jefferson. Of all the navy yards, that at Washington was the most developed, nurtured by the attentive hand of Commodore Thomas Tingey; New York Navy Yard at Brooklyn, the Philadelphia Navy Yard, and the Boston Navy Yard at Charlestown were in a somewhat more primitive state, as was Norfolk's Gosport Navy Yard. The least well-equipped was the navy yard at Portsmouth. Navy yard commandants were responsible for the building, fitting out, and repair of warships and they were also in charge of the gunboat flotillas based on those yards.*

In early 1812, Captain William Bainbridge was commandant at the Boston Navy Yard, and he held this position until September when he succeeded Captain Isaac Hull as commanding officer of Constitution. *One of the problems Bainbridge faced was that of readying the frigate* Chesapeake *for war service. The following letter illustrates his predicament.*

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[1] *For documentation concerning the acquisition and improvement of navy yards during the period 1801–1805, see* ASP, Naval Affairs, *I: 84–103.*

Captain William Bainbridge to Secretary of the Navy Hamilton

Navy Yard Charlestown
14th April 1812

Sir,

The Navy Yard here (by the Abstract report of the Navy Store Keeper) is very deficient in Timber for the repairs of the Frigate *Chesapeake*; except what belongs to the frame of the Seventy four[1]-And even the State of that timber cannot be ascertained as it now lies in the mud-I have been informed that several pieces which have been hauled out have proven quite decayed; to know the true state of it-I shall have it removed from its present situation & thoroughly examined-it will be attended with some expence-but in my opinion indispensably necessary.

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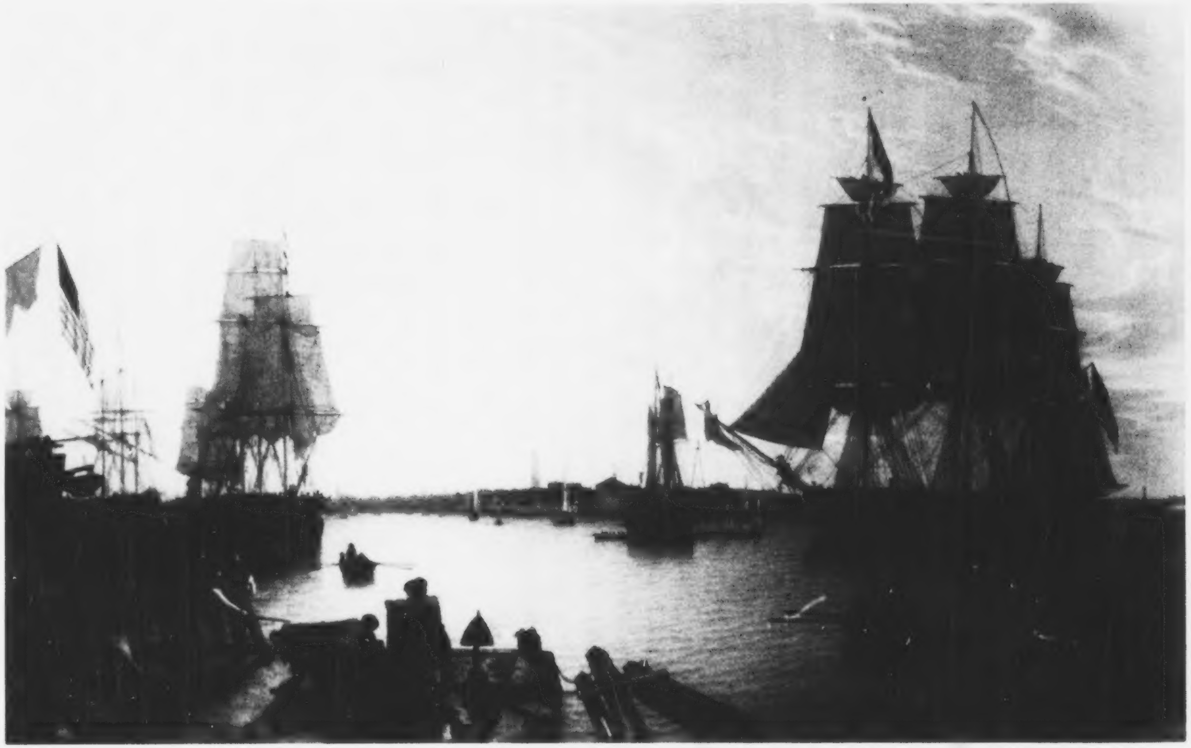

Boston Harbor from Constitution Wharf

The Agents of the War Department (as I am informed) have made destructive work with some of the best wale pieces, plank, & Timber of the 74s—I presume the War Department, has been accommodated in this manner by the Navy Department, on the express condition of having equal quantity & quality returned; but not a particle of which has yet been furnished. Permit me Sir, to suggest, the propriety of desiring the Secretary of War, to have the quantity returned with as little delay, as possible—as the want of it may subject the Naval operations here to inconvenience and extra expences, which might be attributed to neglect, and extravagence in the Navy, when in fact it would be the fault of the War Department.

Be pleased to inform me whether I am authorised to use the timber &c provided for the 74 at this yard in the Repairs of the *Chesepeake*. I have the honor [&c.]

W^{m} Bainbridge

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 1, No. 122.

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1. In 1805, Secretary of the Navy Robert Smith presented a report to the House of Representatives containing an accounting of the materials on hand to build the 74-gun ships. As nothing more was done on these ships until 1813, one may assume that the timbers to which Captain Bainbridge refers are those mentioned in Secretary Smith's report. See *ASP, Naval Affairs*, I: 140-42.

Marines in the War of 1812

On 1 July 1797, Congress passed "An Act Providing a Naval Armament" which authorized the stationing of marines on board U.S. Navy ships, and one year later, the "Act for the Establishing and Organizing a Marine Corps" called for marines to be placed on duty "in the forts and garrisons of the United States, on the sea coast, or any other duty on shore as the President, at his discretion, shall direct."[1] *From that time, marines served at naval stations, navy yards, and in ships. Their main duty in peacetime was to preserve security and to maintain discipline. During war at sea, marines helped to man the fighting tops, and with sailors, boarded or repelled boarders when their ship grappled the enemy. The following document contains orders*

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representative of those issued to marine officers in charge of detachments or "guards" as they were sometimes called, on board ships of the U.S. Navy.

1. Richard Peters, ed., Public Statutes at Large *(Boston, 1861), I: 523–25, 594–96.*

Lieutenant Colonel Commandant Franklin Wharton, U.S.M.C., to Second Lieutenant Alfred Grayson, U.S.M.C.

H.Q. of the Marine Corps.
Washington, April 8th 1812

Sir!

You will as soon as possible repair to Norfolk–Virginia–and from thence proceed on board the Frigate *Congress*, commanded by Capt John Smith & report yourself to him, or in his Absence, the commanding officer, as prepared to receive the Guard of Marines attached to said Frigate[1]–the Command being received, with all the Clothing, Arms, & Accoutrements belonging to it, you must particularly attend to the preservation of Desipline among the Men, to ensure a Military Conduct from them; as I presume no duty will be exacted which could be unpleasant to you as the Officer of the Guard, or which would counteract it.

You are too well acquainted with the application of the Clothing to the Soldier, to make necessary any remarks in regard to issues of it, by me, & in the pay Department I expect you equally informend–from the different Staff officers you will however receive Instructions, or regulation of their offices, to which you must attend to prevent Embarrasment to yourself or them. I must here request you to Keep me informed of the state of your command, whenever your return to port will permit it.

On receiving the Clothing, & such Returns as will ascertain the Accounts of the Men, as to the articles due, & shortly to become due to them, & a calculation made how far you can by that in store relieve their wants, you will report to me what you may consider as immediately essential for their Comfort (Fatigues excepted) that I may take proper steps to meet your requisition, whenever made on the Q. Master.

Health & Happiness attend you, & believe me to be very Respectfully Your obt. Servt.

Franklin Wharton

Lieut. Alfred Grayson, of Marines.

Copy, DNA, RG127, CMC, Letters Sent.

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[1] *Congress*, a 36-gun frigate, was authorized a marine detachment comprised of one lieutenant, two sergeants, two corporals, one drummer, one fifer, and forty privates. The 44-gun frigates carried an additional lieutenant, sergeant, corporal, and ten more privates. See Callan & Russell, *Laws . . . of the Navy*, pp. 88-90.

Nautilus on Embargo Patrol

President Madison's embargo went into effect on 4 April 1812 but was limited to a period of 90 days.[1] *According to its terms, no ships belonging to citizens of the United States were to be allowed clearance for any foreign port unless departing in ballast. Naval and revenue officers were to enforce this law, and stiff penalties of up to a $20,000 fine were to be inflicted on scofflaws.*

There were several reasons for the passage of this legislation. Since war was considered to be imminent, an embargo would give most American ships then at sea a reasonable period to return from their trading voyages before risking capture by hostile warships. Secondly, it was assumed that if war were declared, it would not take place until the expiration of the embargo, and every minute of that time would be needed for war preparations. Thirdly, congressmen opposed to the war supported the measure as a delaying tactic allowing the British more time to consider concessions. Finally, as many merchants and seamen were engaged in shipping grain to British armies in Spain, it was hoped that this measure would sever trade with a potential enemy.[2]

Secretary of the Navy Hamilton shouldered the major burden of enforcing the embargo law at sea. He ordered his senior officers to dispatch patrols to seize illegal shipping all along the coast. Commodore John Rodgers, at New York, ordered Lieutenant William Crane, commander of the brig Nautilus, *14 guns, to patrol the entrance to Boston Bay and occasionally cruise northward along the Maine coast.*

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[1] *Peters,* Public Statutes at Large, *II: 700–701.*

[2] *The law failed to choke off trade with Spain. News of the impending embargo spread rapidly and spurred merchants, owners, and masters to hasten their ships' departures. Several hundred ships cleared with cargos of corn and flour and were on the high seas by the time the embargo became official. See Perkins,* Prologue to War, *p. 386.*

COMMODORE JOHN RODGERS TO LIEUTENANT WILLIAM M. CRANE

(Copy)

U.S. Frigate *President*
New York 13th April 1812

Sir

As soon as the *Nautilus* is ready for service, I have to direct that you proceed to Boston for the purpose of enforcing the enclosed Embargo Law. You are to consider Boston Bay as the general limits of your Station–say from Cape-Cod to Cape-Ann: you may nevertheless occasionally stretch as far north as Passamaquoddy, in the event of your beleiving that by doing so you will be better enabled to enforce the Law.

Agreeably to the orders of the Honble the Secretary of the Navy, you are to consider as proper objects of seizure, all Vessels acting or found under such circumstances as may justify a strong suspicion of their intention to act in violation of any of the provisions of this Law: also to consider that your authority extends to the seizure of all Vessels acting contrary to said Law within the jurisdiction of the United States or elsewhere, not within the Teretorial jurisdiction of another State, which of course under no pretence whatever is to be violated.

All Vessels seized under this Law, are to be sent into the nearest & most convenient Port, for adjudication, & all the papers accompanying them are to be placed in the hands of the District Attorney to be proceeded upon according to law.

In addition to your enforcing the Embargo Law to the utmost of your power, it is expected that you will in like manner afford protection to our neutral rights as an independant nation, & to our Commerce, agreeably to the following extract of an order to me from the Honble the Secretary of the Navy, bearing date 5th of June 1810.

"1st If within a marine league of the Coast of the United States, any British or French armed Vessel should molest any of our merchant Vessels, you will use all the means in your power to defend &

protect such merchant Vessel: & within the harbours: & within the waters of the United States, above low water mark, you will extend the defence & protection to merchant vessels to whatever nation belonging and in all cases where defence & protection are hereby authorised you will take possession of the offending private armed vessel, if found or overtaken within the jurisdictional limits of the United States, & give notice thereof to the District Attorney, that such proceedings may be had as the case may require"

"2nd If any private armed vessel be found within our waters or hovering on our Coast, within the marine league, & there be ground to suspect, the same of a piratical character, or that she has been illegally fitted out, or augmented in her force, within the United States, or has proceeded therefrom in pursuance of any military expedition or enterprize contrary to Law, you will seize the same, & give like notice for the like purpose, to the District Attorney of the United States."

"3d If within our harbours & waters you should discover any of our citizens affording (contrary to Law) any Aid to any foreign armed vessel, either in repairing her, or in furnishing her, her officers or Crew, with supplies of any kind, or if your should discover any Pilot assisting in navigating such armed vessel, unless for the purpose of carrying her beyond the limits and jurisdiction of the United States, you will require two or more of your Crew, to observe particularly, such citizen or pilot & the name of the Witnesses, to the Attorney of the district in which the offence shall be committed, in order that such proceedings may be had against such offenders as the Law directs."

"4th You are not to construe these orders as requiring you to use force, beyond your ports or harbours, altho within a marine league of our Coast, in any case where there is not a prospect of success."

You are to keep me informed of all your movements and transactions relative to the Public Service also to transmit to me a report of all seizures which you may make under the Embargo Law, copies of which you are desired to forward to the Navy Department. At the expiration of the present Embargo Law, you are to return to this port to receive my further instructions.

You will be pleased to address your letters to this place & to send duplicates of them to New Port Respectfully [&c.]

(Signed) Jno Rodgers

Lieut. Comdt Wm M. Crane
Comdg U.S. Brig *Nautilus*

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P.S. You are to advise & co-operate with the Collectors of Customs in the enforcement of the Embargo Law.

(Sigd) J.R.

Copy, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 1, No. 118c.

The Navy at Wilmington, North Carolina

Sailing Master Thomas N. Gautier was the senior officer in charge of gunboats at Wilmington. His nominal superior was Captain John Dent, commander of U.S. naval forces at Charleston. In the months prior to the declaration of war, Gautier's plight was not unlike that of other junior officers who were placed in charge of small detachments of men and gunboats and were short on equipment. While he was engaged in strengthening his forces to enforce the embargo and to defend Wilmington and the Cape Fear River, he received an order from Captain Hugh Campbell, who was in charge of gunboats on the St. Marys River on the Georgia-Florida border. Brigadier General George Mathews of the Georgia Militia requested Campbell's support in blockading Fort St. Augustine. Lacking a sufficient number of vessels, Campbell called upon Gautier to send available gunboats to supplement those at St. Marys and St. Augustine. Gautier's subsequent report to Captain Dent describes the dilemma and requested advice.[1]

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[1] *Sailing Master Gautier had seen earlier service in the U.S. Navy. Gautier entered the navy on 22 Feb. 1800, from North Carolina and served for approximately one year as a lieutenant in the frigate* Congress *during the Quasi-War. He left the navy on 22 June 1801, one of many officers who were discharged because of the Naval Peace Establishment Act. On 4 Aug. 1807, however, Gautier rejoined the Navy and served as sailing master until 25 Aug. 1814. See "Extracts from Muster Roll of U.S. Frigate* Congress. . . ," *Dudley W. Knox, ed.,* Naval Documents Related to the Quasi-War Between the United States and France, *7 vols. (Washington, D.C., 1935–1938) V: 19 and VII: 329.*

SAILING MASTER THOMAS N. GAUTIER TO CAPTAIN JOHN H. DENT

(Copy)

Wilmington (N C) 22d April 1812

Sir,

Having had lately much attention to pay, to what was passing in the River Cape Fear on the Embargo's taking place, is the reason why I have not had it in my power to execute your orders to me of 3rd inst from Washington in making you the report required, I shall confine myself to the Actual State of the Gun Vessels with their military equipments.

I have greatly to lament my not receiving your orders eight days earlier, as I should not now have to regret the loss of my best Gun Vessel *No 168* Schooner rigged, and my confidential Officer Mr John Hulburd S. M. a valuable man, *No 168* was ordered by Captain Campbell to join the St Mary's Flotilla, She was built here at the entreaty of the Citizens, and it was never imagined She would be ordered away (two others *166* & *167* were built at the same time) and as she belongs to this Station, I with deference submit to you the propriety of obtaining a release.

This Harbour requires five gun vessels and a heavy Brig. the Main Bar has 17 feet and the new inlet 13 feet water. I do not know of a place where gun vessels can be of more utility than in Cape Fear Waters, and would be much required in case of War. [Cape Fear Harbor] can be made a rendezvous for any enemy, and out of reach of the Fort Guns, as it was during the revolution and previous to the attack on Charleston.[1]

Our Force at present consists of Only Three Gun Boats *Nos 7, 166,* & *167. No 7* is an old boat mounted with one 32 pounder, and must have immediately New Sails, Awnings, Waist-Cloths and Wind Sails, her present Suit was bent in February, 1808. On board R G. Edwards Acting S.M. Mr [William] Mayo Midshipman 17 petty Officers & Men 1 Corporal and four Marines She is Schooner rigged.

No 166 a new vessel mounted with two 6 pounders, & the Carpenters are making the Carriage Slide &ca for the 32 pounder which will not be ready untill the middle of May. I have some time back indented for a long 18 or 24 with Slide and carriage complete as I conceive a 32 unequal to her Powers. She is Galliot rigged Mr Nehemiah Drew S.M. Messrs Hammersly [George *Hamersley*] & [William J.] Belt Midshipman. 21 petty officers & men 1 Corporal and 4 marines.

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No 167 a new vessel rigged same as *No 166* mounts a 32 pr., Slides and Carriage Complete, and two Sixes. T.N. Gautier Senior Officer, 30 petty Officers & men 1 Corporal and 4 Marines, our Military equipments are trifling, of Muskets 29, Pistols 21, Battle axes 18, Cutlasses none, Boarding Pikes 20, Cordage 18 Coils, Duck 16 Bolts, 2000 Rotten junk 3/4 Cask of paint oil, 10 Kegs Paints: 203 Copper Sheets. 1 Spare Cable 2 tow lines, Casks, Breakers, Kids, Cans & Harness Casks Complete. Powder none but damaged. Powder &ca, Indented for, but not received.

Provisions.

162 bbls pork, 3 bbls beef 19 bbls bread 3 1/8 bbls vinegar
4 bbls flour 2 1/3 Hhds molasses 4 Tierces rice 1/2 tierce pease,
3 Kegs butter, 2 Casks & four cheeses, 6 Boxes Raisins & 6 boxes Candles.

I have received orders from Captain Campbell to place the boats in order for sea, and report them. I am thus Situated, I have always been led to believe they were only intended for river Service. and Should I comply with his orders, it may be contrary to your intentions, I only wish to know if, his orders are to be obeyed or yours exclusively, if so, I shall be happy to give the same Satisfaction to you, as I have every reason to believe I have given him, (H.G.C. Esqr) as my greatest pride is in complying with orders for my Country's Service, to execute them with that promptness and correctness becoming an officer.

Mr [Edwin W.] Turner has reported himself as Purser for this Station and any documents, or papers, required by you, he will soon be enabled to furnish, and any commands from you will be attended to with alacrity. I am Sir [&c.]

(Signed) T. N Gautier
Commanding Officer

Capt. John H. Dent. U.S. Navy, Charleston.

Copy, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 1, No. 165 [Enclosure].

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1. The original version of this letter was sent to Captain Dent who had it copied and forwarded the copy to the secretary of the navy. The bracketed words "Cape Fear Harbor" replace a blank space and indicate the probable location of the "rendezvous." The "Fort" referred to was Fort Johnston, a relatively ill-equipped fortification located near the present town of Southport near the mouth of the Cape Fear River.

The Navy at Charleston, South Carolina

Less than one month after his appointment to command the naval stations at Charleston and Wilmington, Captain John H. Dent faced a bleak situation.[1] *He was immediately responsible for the defense of both cities and for the enforcement of the embargo along the intricate coastlines of North and South Carolina. Having some months earlier recommended the establishment of a naval shipyard at Charleston, he found this placed under his charge as well. The vessels at Dent's disposal were limited to a few gunboats and the brig* Vixen, *12 guns. It is clear, from the following report, that he felt crippled in his lack of ships, men, and useful equipment. He informed Secretary Hamilton that he was in dire need of fresh provisions, and that the cannon, ordnance stores, and gunpowder stored at the yard had been too neglected to be of much use. Apparently, even though Sailing Master Gautier at Wilmington was his subordinate, Dent was in no position to remonstrate with Captain Campbell at St. Marys for ordering away Gautier's gunboats. In writing to Secretary Hamilton, however, Dent made it clear that if some gunboats could be returned, there would be a good use for them in the Carolinas.*

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[1] *Dent was appointed to this command on 28 Mar. 1812.(See Hamilton to Dent, 28 Mar. 1812, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 10, p. 1.) Dent had seen several active years of naval service prior to this duty. He was appointed midshipman in 1798, served in* Constellation *and* President, *and was promoted lieutenant during the Quasi-War. He served in* Essex, John Adams,*and* Constitution, *and commanded* Enterprise, Scourge, *and* Nautilus *during the Tripolitan War, from which he emerged as master commandant. He twice commanded* Hornet *and then* John Adams *in the years 1806-1811.*

CAPTAIN JOHN H. DENT TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Charleston 27th April. 1812

Sir

I have not yet received any information from Mr Gautier, in charge of the Gun Boats at Wilmington. I understand one of the boats belonging to that Station, left this the day before I arrived, for St Marys with Stores. I feel the want of a few Gun Boats here, as I am informed from good Authority that a quantity of goods have been Smuggled into Port Royal Bay and shipped into boats and carried through the inland Navigation on to Augusta (Georgia) also the

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vessels trading to & from those inlets, give no bonds or do they clear with the Custom House, it is easy to reship their rice &c in those Waters without detection, it was done during the last Embargo, and no doubt will be done again. The revenue cutter is undergoing repairs, and we have no vessel here. I understand there are fifteen Gun Boats at St. Marys. if Captain Campbell could spare three, I would place one immediately in George Town River to watch that and the Santee-the other at Beaufort to guard the Sound & inland navigation the *Vixen* is now on a Cruize to the Southward, and will Shortly return here as She is attached to this Station, it will be necessary that I should receive some instructions relative to her future operations. There are here a number of valuable Seamen unemployed, probably more than at any other port in the U.S. as our bar prevented the escape of vessels that were ready to sail when the first intelligence of the Embargo reached this-if not immediately engaged for the Service they will leave this, or in event of War, will engage in Privateers in preference to the Navy. I have commenced to day transporting the Guns, to the yard, there are about fifty of different Calibre's. I am sorry to add from exposure and the want of paint, they are very much injured from rust, and I fear many will be found unfit for Service, the Carriages from the same cause are rotten, and many destroyed. to get the iron by Negroes as they have been left at their disposal, I shall immediately have them repaired as far as practicable and replaced by new ones. I made a requisition on [First] Lieut [Robert D.] Wainwright for a guard of Marines to be placed at the yard for the protection of the Stores &ca, he informed me it was not in his power to comply with my requisition, having but four privates under his command, would it not be better that they should be removed to the yard where there is a proper room provided for their accommodation, and thereby be of some Service, and save the expence of renting an additional establishment. I wish Sir, you would take this into consideration, and authorize me to build such barracks as you think may be requisite for the Marines that may be attached to this Station, they will then be situated near the powder magazine, and thereby save the State the expence of a Guard, and in consideration thereof permit the powder of the U. S. to be placed there on a better footing than it is at present. I am informed our powder has been lying there many years without being turned or aired which is absolutely necessary for its preservation. I shall immediately have it examined, and ascertain its situation & quantity. I am much afraid Sir from what little observation that I have been able to make on the few Stores we have here, that they are of little value, being principally composed of remnants, there are but two officers here. Sailing Masters [Charles] Grandison & [Joseph P.] Prince, I have just learnt that Midshipman [Joseph] Brailsford is in town. I have ordered him to report himself, and shall employ him until further orders. there being no money subject to my orders I have directed the Agent to make a requisition for Eight Thousand dollars to meet such contracts as shall be made, for recruiting service, advances to the purser on account of pay, & contingent expences. I am also informed by the agent, that a small vessel (coppered) and used as a Tender had been Sold by order of Capt Campbell some time since, and the purchaser not having complied with the terms of Sale (nor no probability of so doing) I have ordered him to take the necessary legal steps to recover her as she is greatly wanted. I shall as soon as possible make a return of all the Stores &c, belonging to the Department, with particular remarks, on their state & condition for service. I would in the mean time recommend that cordage, canvass twine, Iron, nails, spikes, a small forge, with Tools one hundred & fifty stand of arms, with accoutrements, one hundred sabres, Eighty pair of Pistols be sent here, as those articles will be immediately wanted. I have the Honor to be [&c.]

J H Dent

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 1, No. 151.

A Shortage of Marines

Although the Marine Corps was authorized to have about 1,000 men and officers at the outbreak of the War of 1812, they had only about one-half that number. Consequently, the secretary of the navy was obliged to send most of the available marines to the frigates where they were badly needed. Along with shortages of men, however, there were insufficient supplies of uniforms and equipment. As can be seen in the following letter, the Marine Corps commandant, Lieutenant Colonel Commandant Franklin Wharton, was anxious to bring shipboard marine complements up to full strength before hostilities began.

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Lieutenant Colonel Commandant Franklin Wharton, U.S.M.C., to Captain John Hall, U.S.M.C.

H.Q. of the Marine Corps.
Washington, May 4th 1812,

Sir!

My last required you to compleat the Guard of the *President*, on her appearance off the Hook, which was expected in a short time.[1] The *Essex* is cruising with that Frigate, & has an incomplete Guard-I must now request you to furnish Lieut Gamble with one Sergeant, one Corporal, & Eight privates-the number of Men deficient, & that you also furnish him with the Clothing of his detachments, as far as you possibly can[2]-inform him Music shall be added very soon.[3] I hope success attends your rendezvous, & that your next report will be able to shew that you want no aid from Philadelphia, to meet the requisition of Capt Chauncey.[4] I shall be there I hope soon to make arrangements with Capt Gale, however, in case you must be supplied with Men by him.[5] I am [&c.]

F. Wharton

Capt John Hall,
Commandg Marines,
New York.

Copy, DNA, RG127, CMC, Letters Sent.

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[1] The "Hook" refers to Sandy Hook, New Jersey, located about 12 miles south of Manhattan Island. Sandy Hook Bay provided a safe anchorage and a convenient rendezvous point for Commodore Rodgers' squadron.

[2] 1st Lieutenant John M. Gamble was currently in charge of *Essex*'s marine detachment.

[3] Ships' marines customarily included one fifer and one drummer, commonly referred to as "Music."

[4] Captain Isaac Chauncey, USN, was commandant of the New York Navy Yard at the outbreak of the War of 1812.

[5] Captain Anthony Gale, was commanding officer of marines, Philadelphia, stationed at the Philadelphia Navy Yard.

The Preparation of Munitions

Six weeks before the declaration of war, Navy Secretary Hamilton ordered the officers in charge of navy yards and naval stations to test the powder held in the magazines of their installations. In some cases, the tests revealed a sad situation. When powder was held in barrels for great lengths of time without periodic inspections, testing, and drying, its potency declined. This is apparently what had occurred at the Gosport (now Norfolk) Navy Yard. In the following report, Master Commandant Samuel Evans describes the results of tests taken and compared these with similar tests taken of the powder carried on board the frigate United States.

MASTER COMMANDANT SAMUEL EVANS TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Navy Yard Gosport
8th May 1812

Sir,

I have the honor to subjoin as perfect a report of the Powder in the Magazine here, as is in my power. Agreeable to your Orders of the 21st ultimo.

Not being able to procure a provette[1] I was obliged to try the strength of what we have here by comparing it with some approved powder from the Frigate *U. States.*-The Numbers-1-2-& 3 is the powder belonging to the Frigate-and the other Numbers are that in our Magazine-It was all tried under the same circumstances with a Howitzer carrying a three pound Ball, elivated nine degrees, and charged with a half an ounce of each description of Powder. I have the honor [&c.]

Sam^{l} Evans

		Diste Thrown		Diste Thrown		Diste Thrown
Frigate *U. States*	No 1	452 feet	No 38	159 feet	No 76	287
	2	398	39	97	77	161
	3	268	40	136	78	156

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[No] of Barrel	7	112	41	119	79	118
[in the] Magazine	8	286	43	96	80	136
	9	122	45	136	81	136
	13	81	48	143	82	166
	14	202	49	133	83	88
	15	102	50	172	84	177
	16	63	51	192	85	112
	17	164	56	153	86	301
	18	128	57	218	89	108
	19	154	58	374	90	210
	20	112	59	95	92	118
	21	177	60	410	93	90
	22	134	61	104	94	108
	23	123	64	104	97	178
	24	95	65	123	96	81
	25	293	66	77	101	95
	26	233	67	136	103	59
	27	188	68	98	104	71
	31	197	69	203	105	150
	32	124	70	111	106	136
	36	128	71	148	169	140
	37	129	75	89	102	130

Priming powder	
No 6	328
9	172
10	144
11	208
28	116
100	362
107	95

Note. Barrels No 1-2-95 & 74 are in a cake and entirely damaged.

Sam^{l} Evans

ALS, DNA, RG45, MC, 1812, Vol. 1, No. 38.

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1. Provette (eprovette): a small iron mortar commonly used to test new lots of black powder.

The Weakening of Gunboat Crews

In order to provide marines for larger warships, the secretary of the navy had to remove them from gunboats on southern stations where there was less chance they might see action. While no such orders were sent to navy commandants at Gosport, New York, Newport, or Boston, these officers could provide men for the ships much more quickly when the need arose, than could the remote southern stations.

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON TO SELECTED OFFICERS

Circular

Capt Shaw, N. Orleans
Capt Dent, Chaston, S.C.
Capt Campbell, St. Marys, Ga.

Nav: Dep'mt.
6 May 1812

We find it impracticable to provide Marines for the Gunboats-it is indeed with difficulty we can procure a sufficient number for the frigates & other Vessels of War. We must therefore abandon the plan of having a detachment of Marines on board each Gunboat & all Marines now on board Gunboats must be withdrawn & deliverd over to the Commanding officer of Marines. You will accordingly have the arrangement carried into effect with respect to all the Gunboats prepared or preparing for service by You.

P. Hamilton

Copy, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 10, pp. 33-34.

Logistical Support for the Marines

War preparations demanded anticipation of needs everywhere that ships and men of the navy and marines were stationed. If not already

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available, uniform articles, blankets, arms, and ammunition would have to be ordered and shipped to points where they were likely to be needed. Officers responsible for procuring these supplies contacted the navy agent serving their command. He would, in turn, contact the manufacturers or suppliers of these goods and arrange for shipment and payment. The following letter illustrates these points and is also interesting for the attention paid to marine supplies ordered to Oneida, *the only U.S. Navy warship stationed on Lake Ontario in May 1812.*

LIEUTENANT COLONEL COMMANDANT FRANKLIN WHARTON, U.S.M.C., TO CAPTAIN JOHN HALL, U.S.M.C.

[Extract]

H. Q. of the Marine Corps
Washington, May 10th 1812

Sir!

. . . A late decision of the Navy Department, in regard to Gun Boat Guards, will I know now much relieve you from the anxiety caused by the last heavy demands on you for them; the Guards for the Frigates must now be most particularly attended to, on their reaching the Hook.[1] You must through the Navy Agent forward supplies for the *Oneida*.[2] The Quarter Master has again been directed to ship Arms, &c., & Capt. [Anthony] Gale reports that the Articles with him only wait a Conveyance. remember the *Oneida* is near to the probable scene of action: She cannot remain longer without your attention. . . . I am [&c.]

F: Wharton
Lt. Col. Commt.
M. Corps.

Capt. John Hall,
Commandg. Marines,
New York.

Copy, DNA, RG127, CMC, Letters Sent.

1. For an example of Secretary Hamilton's orders regarding withdrawal of marines from gunboats, see p. 107, Circular to Captains Shaw, Dent and Campbell, 6 May 1812, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 10, pp. 33-34.

2. *Oneida*, 16-gun brig, built at Oswego, New York, on Lake Ontario in 1808-1809. She became Commodore Isaac Chauncey's flagship.

The Pre-War Atmosphere at Charleston

Captain John Dent, the commanding officer of U.S. naval forces at Charleston, had many worrisome tasks to accomplish in preparation for the war he believed was approaching. One of these was supervision of the accounts of the navy's agents in Charleston, Nathaniel Ingraham & Son, about whom he had received complaints. At the same time, he found it difficult to convince citizens of Charleston of the seriousness of the threat of war, and in the letter to Secretary Hamilton which follows, he comments on their skepticism. The British had stationed warships off Charleston, and Dent's officers frequently had to run a gauntlet as they made their patrols, as did Lieutenant Gadsden in his close call with H.M. sloop Colibri.

CAPTAIN JOHN H. DENT TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Charleston 14th May. 1812

(Private)

Sir,

I have advertised ten days in the papers of this City for all accounts against the Navy Department on this Station to be rendered in, to me, in order (as I informed you) to assertain whether the reports in circulation injurious to the Navy, and the Character of the Navy Agents, were without foundation or not. I am happy to say none such as have been complained of have appeared. those gentlemen have been much injured from reports in circulation, that the Mechanic's Bills were unpaid altho' receipted for, and the monies transmitted by the Department had been applied to other purposes, and their notes substituted. From a clear and full investigation with Mr [Nathaniel] Ingraham, of

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all the transactions relative to his official duty I believe him correct, which has brought about a perfect reconciliation between us.

I am also happy to inform you the appointment of Major Pinckney has given great satisfaction in this quarter.[1] He has not been in Town since my arrival, but I am informed by his Son, he is making his private arrangements expecting daily to be called into active Service. I am sorry to add the people here do not believe we are going to war, and are too much disposed to treat our National Councils with Contempt and consider their preparations as electioneering; the failure of the Loan has also afforded the English party here some triumph which I hope may be removed by some act of a hostile nature.

I observe Commodores Rogers & Decatur are on a Cruize, there are two English Frigates off this coast, with some smaller cruizers. I must observe that Lieut Gadsden in falling in with the *Colibri* Brig of 20 Guns during his last Cruize,[2] acted in my opinion with great firmness and propriety; they approached each other prepared for action, and remained in that situation within pistol Shot for half an hour, without Speaking, when they both Sheered off, had Gadsden hailed, he would have received no answer, [and] his great inferiority in force, would have placed him in a delicate Situation I have the honor [&c.]

J H Dent

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 1, No. 180.

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[1] Thomas Pinckney served in the Continental Army during the American Revolution, rising to the rank of major. Following the war, he held several public offices including governor of South Carolina and minister to Great Britain. In Jan. 1812, Congress authorized the creation of several general, field, and staff officers. Pinckney was appointed major general, second in command to Major General Henry Dearborn. Pinckney was given command of the military district extending from North Carolina to the Mississippi River.

[2] Christopher Gadsden, Jr., commanded the U.S. brig *Vixen* at the time of his encounter with *Colibri*. He was promoted master commandant on 10 July 1812, but died on 28 Aug. 1812. The British "Ships in Sea Pay" identifies *Colibri* as a sloop; see p. 182, below.

Stalemate in East Florida

Following the dismissal of Brigadier General Mathews, President Madison appointed Georgia Governor David Mitchell a special agent *of the United States and charged him with the task of arranging an orderly withdrawal of insurgents from East Florida. Like Mathews, Mitchell was authorized to call on naval and military commanders for support. The chance that hostilities could break out with Spanish or even British forces was real. Mitchell would not withdraw forces without a guarantee from the Spanish that there would be no reprisals made against insurgents who lived in East Florida. As the Spanish would not negotiate, Mitchell requested Captain Campbell to leave his gunboats on duty on the St. Johns River. Lack of speedy communications and specific orders from Washington again left Campbell uncertain of the proper course. He requested instructions but complied with Mitchell's request, as can be seen in the next document.*

CAPTAIN HUGH G. CAMPBELL TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

St Marys May 16th 1812

Sir,

Herewith I have the honor to enclose a requisition of Governor Mitchell for a Gun Boat to be stationed on the St Johns River which has been complied with by ordering on that service *No 165*, Robert Cutchins Commander. The other Boats are in obedience to your orders of the 4th Ult Stationed in the most advantageous manner for enforceing the Embargo Law, from the enterence of Bell River near roses Bluff above this town, to St Catherines Sound. The two Boats on St Johns River by request of Governor Mitchell, *No 63* at Picolata, as my last respects informed you, and *No 165* about 7 miles above the entrence of that River, deprives the waters of Sapelo and St Simons of that protection the present state of affairs require. An addition of two more Gun Boats would compleatly guard the Rivers and Inlets of this state. Governor Mitchell Considers himself authorised to call on me for such aid as circumstances may require, and my not having orders to the Contrary, consider myself bound to Comply with his requisitions. Permit me to request the favour of some advice on that head. Nothing new has transpired since my last except a meeting of about 30 Indians of the lower Creeks with General Mathews at Picalata, they returned home appearantly satisfied having promised not to Interfere with the disputes of white People. I have the Honor to be [&c.]

Hugh G Campbell

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LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 1, No. 187

Gunboat *No. 168* vs. H.M. Brig *Sappho*

The continued presence of U.S. naval gunboats at Amelia Island and near St. Augustine created the likelihood of hostile contact with British naval vessels. On 13 May 1812, there occurred an inconclusive but unusual engagement between a U.S. Navy gunboat and a British warship; it was unusual because of the great disparity of force existing between the two vessels. Attempting to enforce American embargo laws, Sailing Master John Hulburd challenged H.M. brig Sappho *which was standing by to escort a ship whose master intended to evade the embargo. Both Hulburd and the British captain were aware that a conflict between them could have serious consequences. Brief though it was, this incident showed the zeal with which officers of these opposing navies followed their orders in a time of tense international relations.*

CAPTAIN HUGH G. CAMPBELL TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

St Marys May 22d 1812

Sir,

My last respects of the 6th Inst made you acquainted with the British Brig of War *Sappho* having anchored near Amelia in spanish waters.

I have now the honor to enclose for your information some particulars touching the Conduct of her commander, towards the lawfull Authority of the United States, as appears by the report of Mr John Hulburd commanding Gun Vessel *No 168*, and my orders to that officer relative to the *Sappho* and a Merchant Vessel known to be an Embargo breaker, which vessel I had seized after the fall of Fernandeno, but restored her, to her former owner in consequence of a demand made by General Mathews, in compliance with that article of capitulation wherein Property and person are protected. I have the Honor [&c.]

Hugh G Campbell

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 1, No. 195.

SAILING MASTER JOHN HULBURD TO CAPTAIN HUGH G. CAMPBELL

U.S. Gun Vessel *No 168*
St Marys River May 16 1812

Sir,

In compliance with your order I proceeded with this vessel to the south point of Cumberland Island where I remained at Anchor untill the 15th Inst at 7 A.M. the British Brig *Sappho* of 18 Guns said to be 32 pounders fired and let fall her Fore Top Sail, which I understood to be a Signal to her Convoy The ship *Fernandeno* loosed sails at the same time. At 1/2 past 7 the ship weighed and stood towards the Bar, at 8 the *Sappho* followed immediately Reefed Top sails, 10 minutes past 8 I weighed and stood for the Bar under Short sail, the wind fresh from W,S,W, at 9 passed the Brig *sappho* at anchor, the north point of Amelia bearing S,W, by W, I then made sail crossed the Bar and hove to in 7 1/2 fathoms, the *Fernandeno* hove to a mile to the eastward of me, 25 minutes past nine the *sappho* fired a Gun, the ship filled and stood to the eastward, the Brig crossed the Bar. at 7 minutes past 10 passed athwart her stern when both vessel lay too, after hailing I asked the following questions and receivd these answers—Is that ship the *Fernandeno* formerly the *Amelia* under American Colours, now under spanish Colours under your protection—She is—That ship the *Fernendeno* is a proscribed Vessel under the denomination of an Embargo Breaker, having violated the late Embargo law, of which sufficient proof has been lodged with the proper authority, in consequence of which I have received from the senior officer commanding the United States Naval Force on the southern station, to take possession of that ship, this being the case sir, I hope that you will not protect or assist her in her attempt to escape from Justice—That ship sir, is under spanish Colours, I am bound to protect her—I shall protest, I do protest in the name of the United States, under orders from my superior officer, against your assisting her, I will take possession of her-I will send you a Copy of my Instructions—I do not wish to see them-I then ordered Mr Pentland to go on board with a Copy of my Instructions, which were presented to her Commander, after several questions being asked they were read, and the following answer received—Tell your commander that he has done his duty to his country, but that ship is under spanish Colours and I am bound to protect her-I then filled away and stood after the ship, the Brig wore and stood to the Northward and Eastward, at 34 minutes past 10 oclock Amelia Island

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bearing west distant 10 miles Fired a shot at the ***Fernandeno***, to which she paid no attention. 46 past 10 fired a six pound shot and canister at the ship, several of the shot struck her quater and sails, she rounded too. I took possession of her and papers and ordered her to lie too untill there was a prize master sent on board. For three or four days past the sickly situation of my crew rendered it difficult to spare so many seamen to man so large a ship. The *sappho* by this time had spoken the ship. I then Tacked to the Northward, and passing the Brig was hailed from her with an order – Send that ships papers on board or I will fire into you – Your orders I shall disobey – Heave too or I shall fire into you-To which I made no reply-Heave too, I shall send my boat on board – ay, ay, but continued my course passing the ship ordered her to stand in for the Land with her Starboard tacks on board or I should fire into her. The Brig on passing the ship I presume ordered her to proceed, whilst the Brig attempted to manouvre so as to detain this vessel. and at one time it appeared their Intention to run foul. but finding her to work too quick gave it over. at 1/2 past 12 the other boat stood in for the Land while this vessel persued the ship. at one P.M. was hailed again schooner a hoi-Hollo-that ship is under spanish Colours. I am bound to protect her, as much so as though she was under English Colours. if you fire into her it may be attended with serious consequences in making a breach between the two nations which It will take a length of time to heal. I shall be extremely sorry to do any thing to widen a breach which appears already to exist, but to orders I am in duty bound to and will obey-at 1/2 past one hailed again from the *sappho*; if you fire into that ship I will fire into you – If you do I shall most undoubtedly return the shot. I will carry that ship into Port unless prevented by a superior force. 5 minutes before two fired at the ship. 35 minutes after two fired again at the ship one minute before three fired again at the ship. the shot struck along side of her. one minute after three the Brig *sappho* fired athwart the stern of this Vessel. at 7 or 8 Fathoms distance, the north point of Amelia bearing W.N.W. distant 24 miles. 2 minutes past three fired athwart the *sappho* stern at nearly the same distance and tacked to the southward, the Brig wore at the same time. 4 minutes past three the *sappho* fired a round shot and stand of Grape or Canister which passed between the Masts of this Vessel some of the small shot falling both sides of her. five minutes after three fired two round shot and a stand of Grape at the *sappho* which must have passed between her masts as some of her rigging was seen to fall abaft her foremast, at this time the two Vessels were within less than one fourth of a mile of each other. I immediately hauled upon the wind followed by the Brig on my lee quater for half an hour manouvreing as though they intended to rake at times, I kept up on the wind untill he kept away from the *Fernandeno*. I arrived here this morning I am Sir [&c.]

John Hulburd, S Master

Hugh G. Campbell, Esqr.
A true Copy Loring Pepoon Clerk

Copy, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 1, No. 195a.

Gunboats for Southern Waters

The only major effort in ship construction for the U.S. Navy during the administrations of Presidents Thomas Jefferson and James Madison, until 1813, was that of building gunboats. At the onset of the War of 1812, there were over 100 gunboats in service in several ports and in varying states of readiness. While suitable for cruising and patrols in shallow bays and estuaries along the Atlantic and Gulf coasts, they had a reputation for being unseaworthy, relatively slow, and unstable as gun platforms. A product of defensive naval thinking, they were ill-suited to the type of offshore cruising and commerce raiding that most naval officers wished to pursue. Yet for harbor defense, the gunboats were the only weapons the navy had, and they were much utilized in southern waters. As many men served in them, and were involved in their supply and maintenance, the gunboat service of the War of 1812 was an important facet of naval life and was more closely related to life on the "home front" than was frigate service on the high seas. The following report of Master Commandant Samuel Evans, commandant of the Gosport Navy Yard, demonstrates some of the problems of preparing and manning gunboats.

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MASTER COMMANDANT SAMUEL EVANS TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Navy Yard Gosport
22nd May 1812

Sir,

I have had the honor to receive your letter of the 15th Inst to day.

The last eight Gun Boats ordered to be fitted out are as it regards their equipment in readiness for Service, with the exception of Some Small articles with which I have not yet furnished *Nos 148, 149* & *150*, owing to their not having Commanders, and the ability to procure the articles at an hours notice, and with the exception of part of the compliment of men you have allowed them.

The best view I can give as it regards the manning of them will I believe be to furnish you with an abstract from the Books of each boat, including the Officers and Men borne on them respectively which is as follows-

No 60 has a Sailing Master Commanding, one Midshipman, one Gunner, One Pursers Steward, One Cook, Five Seaman & Nine Ordinary Seamen.

No 61 has a Sailing Master Commanding, One Gunner, One Boatswain, Two Midshipman, One Pursers Steward, One Cook, Six Seaman, Eight Ordinary Seaman, and one Boy.

No 67 has a Sailing Master, One Midshipman, One Boatswain, One Gunner, one armourer, one Pursers Steward, One Cook, Six Seaman, Five Ordinary Seaman, and one Boy.

No 146 has a Sailing Master Comdg, one Midshipman, One Gunner, One Boatswain, One Pursers Steward, One Cook, Eight seaman, Two Ordinary Seaman and One Boy.

No 147 has a Sailing Master Comdg, Two Midshipman, One Gunner, One Boatswain, Three Seaman, & One Ordinary Seaman

No 148 has Two Midshipman, One Pursers Steward, and one Boy

No 149 has Two Midshipman.

No 150 has One Midshipman.

There has Sailed from Norfolk during the last and present year the following Gun Boats *No 10* Commanded by Midshipman Jones Sailed for St Mary's in May 1811. *No 62* Commanded by Sailing Master Winslow Foster and *No 63* Commanded by Sailing Master Bartran G. Hipkins Sailed for St Mary's in June 1811-and *No 4* Commanded by Sailing Master [Lawrence W.] Stith Sailed for the same place in August 1811. one of the Six Boats fitted out for St Marys but ordered to be kept on this station left here in March last for Washington with the *Constitution* on the order I believe of Commodore Decatur. She has not yet returned. *No 68* is the other Boat fitted out for St Marys and ordered to be kept here *No 69* is still on this Station. She is Commanded by Sailing Master [Lewis B.] Page and has on board One Midshipman, One Master's Mate, One Boatswain, One Gunner, One Carpenter, One Pursers Steward, One Cook, Four Seaman, & eight Ordinary Seaman.

I think it probable that the Sloop Rigged Boats that is *No 60, 61, 67* & *68* will want some repairs during the Summer, as when we caulked them last year we found a considerable number of their plank, decayed in places, and on taking the decayed pieces out, some of their timbers were also found defective.

Enclosed are Copies of Five letters relative to the equipment of the Gun Boats last ordered for Service, which are [*torn*] I had the honor to receive from you on the Subject, with the exception of those under date of the 10th and 20th Janry 1812 Respectfully I have the honor [&c.]

Sam^{l} Evans

Since the Frigates *U States* and *Congress* have closed their Rendezvous we got more men than we have heretofore. Now There are however very few Seaman at Norfolk. S. E.

ALS, DNA, RG45, MC, 1812, Vol. 1, No. 42.

In Search of a Naval Strategy

Secretary of the Navy Paul Hamilton had done a competent job of running the Navy Department during three years of peacetime opera-

tions, when its size was such that naval officers had doubts about its continued existence. Only with much argument had the secretary managed to persuade Congress to refit ships laid up in ordinary. New construction before the commencement of the War of 1812 was out of the question.

The onset of war, however, brought a new dimension to the secretary's job. Whether the navy should be used if war came had been a question debated in the presence of President Madison in February 1812. Secretary Hamilton, perhaps playing devil's advocate, suggested that with such a small navy, the United States would risk losing it entirely in sending ships against the British fleet. According to Irving Brant, Madison's biographer, the president took the side of the navy's more aggressive captains and argued that victories would be needed and that if our ships were lost in seeking them, they could be replaced.[1]

With this phase of the argument settled, the question of precisely how the navy would be used remained at issue. Secretary Hamilton was careful to solicit the opinions of two of the most experienced and successful of the navy's commanders, Commodores John Rodgers and Stephen Decatur. Letters containing their replies follow in the order in which they were received. Their opinions differ particularly in regard to the proper disposition of warships at sea. Commodore Rodgers saw great advantages to be gained from combining all ships in a cruising squadron that would search out British convoys and force the British to concentrate, drawing their warships away from American harbors. Commodore Decatur argued that navy ships would have better results if they were to operate either singly or in pairs.

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[1] *Irving Brant, "Timid President? Futile War?"* American Heritage, *Vol. X, No. 6 (Oct. 1959), pp. 46–47, 85–89; Linda Maloney, "The War of 1812: What Role for Sea Power?" in Kenneth J. Hagan, ed.,* In Peace and War: Interpretations of American Naval History *(Westport, Conn., 1978), pp. 46–62.*

Secretary of the Navy Hamilton to Commodore John Rodgers

Comre Rodgers
N York

Nav: Dep'mt
21 May 1812

As a war appears now inevitable, I request you to state to me, a plan of operations, which, in your judgment, will enable our little navy to annoy in the utmost extent, the Trade of Gt Britain while it least exposes it to the immense naval force of that Government. State also, the Ports of the US which you think the safest as assylums for our navy, in time of war.

P. Hamilton

Copy, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 10, pp. 41-42. On the same day, Secretary Hamilton sent an identical letter to Commodore Decatur; see Hamilton to Decatur, 21 May 1812, ibid., p. 42.

COMMODORE JOHN RODGERS TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

U.S. Frigate *President*
Staten Island June 3d, 1812

Sir,

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 21st ult. and in answer to your enquiries permit me to state, that in my humble opinion to annoy the trade of Great Britain with the greatest effect would be at the commencement of a War, to dispose our comparatively very small force, in such a way as to harrass her W India commerce by our lightest vessels: and her coasting trade, East India trade & other foreign trade by our Frigates & one or two of our fastest sailing sloops of war: our small vessels to be disposed in a way, according to circumstances, to annoy to the greatest extent all the avenues leading to & from her West India Islands, Surinam, Berbice, & Denamara: a small squadron of two, or three of our fastest sailing frigates & a single sloop of War, to cruise on the coasts of England, Ireland, & Scotland; & the residue of our frigates to to act seperately, or in squadron on our own coasts to harrass the enemy by cruising in the tracts of his ships trading between him & his colonies of Canada, Nova Scotia, & Newfoundland; and occasionally to unite all our Frigates & attack his East India convoys.

This, Sir, would in my opinion, be the most advisable disposition that could be made of our little navy, at least for the first six months, perhaps during the whole of the War: as it would be menacing them in the very teeth, & effecting the the distruction of their commerce in a manner the most perplexing to their government, & in a way the least expected by the nation generally, including those belonging to the Navy: the self styled Lords of the Ocean!!

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Such a view as I have taken of the subject may, at first sight, appear chymerical; particularly if we reason arithmetically, & take into consideration that we have only a dozen vessels in commission, & they five hundred: but this is the very reason, I think, why such dispersion should be made, as by the like, it would require a comparatively much greater force to protect their own trade, even at the mouths of their own harbors, than it would to annihilate ours, & our little navy with it; was such a disposition to be exercised as to invite their whole disposable force to our coast, or even to any considerable distance from their own.

By this I am not to be understood, Sir, as saying that our vessels ought to remain stationary at any one point; but, on the contrary, that they ought to be kept moving from one part of the coast to another; particularly those stationed on the coast of England from one part of that coast to another, until the attention of a large portion of their most active force have been drawn to the protection of their own commerce, in their own waters: having effected this, our vessels ought then to leave the coast and not return to it again until they had drawn the enemy off to protect his trade in some other quarter.

It is very generally believed that the coasts of England, Ireland & Scotland are always swarming with British Men of War, and that their commerce would be found amply protected against any force as I have mentioned; this however I well know by experience in my voyages when a youth, to be incorrect and that, it has always been their policy, to keep their enemies as far distant from their shores as possible; by stationing their ships at the commencement of a War, on the enemies coasts, & in such other distant situations, as to render its effect nugatory, & thereby be enabled to protect their own commerce in a two fold degree—This however they have been enabled to do, owing as well to the inactivity of the enemy, as to the local advantages derived from their relative situations; and to support what I now say, I do assert, that in the event of a War, it will be found, that the largest force they will soon be able to send to our Coast, will not prevent the few vessels we have, from getting to sea, and annoying their Commerce to an extent not only to make them feel their effect most seriously, but at the same time in a manner to astonish all Europe—In fine they will soon find that we are neither Frenchmen, or Spaniards, Hollanders, or Danes.

Permit me, Sir, to say, that in the event of a war it would be particularly gratifying to me to command, on the coast of England, such a squadron as I have mentioned; as I conceive that, barring unforeseen accidents, such as ought not to be expected, I may with propriety pledge myself to make the commerce of that arrogant nation feel its effects to the very quick-They have already I perceive honored me with a place in their lying naval chronicle with the title of Buccaneer, and nothing on this side of the grave would afford me more real satisfaction, than to have such an opportunity, as I have mentioned, of affording them a more bitter subject for their still more bitter & illiberal animadversions.

In the event of a War with England, should our small vessels be employed in the W Indies: Charleston & Savannah would be found the most eligible places of rendevous for them; as well because these places would be nearest to the enemy, as on account of the inaccessibility of the coast to strangers; & for the same reasons would be found the safest port, to send their prizes into: Charleston would I think be found the most suitable of the two, as the enemy could not calculate on Blockading it with any degree of effect.

Our Coast from Cape Hatteras to Passamaquoddy affords almost numberless good ports for our small vessels in time of War; any of which that are fortified, would answer perfectly well: New York I think however the most preferable, as on account of its easy access & egress, by way of the sound & Sandy Hook, they would find no difficulty in getting out or in at any time; neither any in equipping their vessels with the greatest dispatch.

There are no ports south of Cape Hatteras except it be Port Royal (S.C.) (and that is not fortified) capable of being made a suitable place of rendezvous for our frigates in time of War; neither are there many even north of that in the present state of our country, but what present some obstacles-no ports either in the Chesapeak or Delaware would be suitable, as the entrance of either might be blockaded with much effect by a superior force: and there is almost an equal objection to New York on account of its inaccessability, there not being more than one hour in the twenty four that affords a sufficient depth of water to admit of our largest frigates crossing Sandy Hook Bar:-As a rendezvous for our frigates I must therefore say that, from any knowledge I possess of the several ports north of the Chesapeak, New Port & Boston are the most suitable; & of the two, New Port the most as it is most easy of access & egress at all seasons of the year;

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and our revolutionary war furnishes proof that a superior force would find it very difficult, if not impossible to prevent, for any length of time, an inferior one from getting to sea: I should therefore recommend New Port as the most suitable rendezvous for our frigates in time of war. With the greatest respect [&c.]

Jn^{o} Rodgers

PS Sir

Previous to the commencement of war permit me to suggest whether it might not be advisable to remove our frigates from Norfolk, as the enemy might with a superior force, Blockade them from Hampton Road

J R

N.B. I have a lame finger which makes my writing even more unintelligible than it generally is; but owing to the subject of this scrawl I did not like to have it copied by any one else.

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 1, No. 56.

COMMODORE STEPHEN DECATUR TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Norfolk June 8th 1812

Sir

I arrived in Hampton Roads in company with the *Congress* on the 6th too late for the mail yesterday being Sunday, there was no mail, hence the cause of your not being sooner informed of my arrival My coming into port prior to the time specified by your instructions was for the purpose of obtaining two main topsail yards for the *Congress*, in the place of two which she lost during the cruise During our cruise we have not seen, or heard of any cruisers.

In answer to your letter of the 14th Inst I have to state, that the plan which appears to me to be the best calculated, for our little Navy to annoy the Trade of Great Britain, in the greatest extent, & at the same time expose it least, to the immense naval force of that Government, would be to send them out with as large a supply of provision as they can carry, distant from our coast, & singly, or not more than two Frigates in company, without giving them any specific instructions as to place of cruising, but to rely on the enterprise of the officers. This mode has been recently adopted by the French, & with the greatest success.

Two Frigates cruising together would not be so easily traced by an enemy as a greater number, their movements would be infinitely more rapid, they would be sufficiently strong in most instances to attack a convoy, & the probability is that they would not meet with a superior cruising force; If however, they should meet with a superior force & cannot avoid it. we would not have to regret the whole of our marine crushed at one blow. As by far the greater risque will be encountered in going out & coming into port, I think we ought to remain out as long as possible; the advantage of distant cruising would be to relieve our own coast by withdrawing from it a number of the hostile ships, or compelling the enemy to detach from Europe another force in search of us. Most of our ports I consider safe for our ships when in, unless we were sufficiently numerous in any one Port, to make it an object for the enemy to employ great force against us, in which case I should give the preferince to Boston, New London, & Norfolk, which places from the narrowness of their waters might be defended with much less force than either of our other ports. It is my opinion that many vessels in any one port would invite attack & might place it in the power of the Enemy by one attack, to distroy the whole.

The ports of Boston, Portsmouth. N.H., & Portland will be the safest Harbours for our return to from cruising, particularly in the winter season. The impracticability of blockading our Eastern coast during that season, has been proven by the British themselves during our revolution.

If war takes place, It will I think be of great importance to the country, that we should receive our instruction & be sent out before the declaration shall be known by the enemy-it would no doubt draw from our coast in search of us, the greater part of their cruisers, that are now lying in Burmuda, perfectly prepared & waiting events. I am in want of two cables which are now making for me-those & the spars requisite for the *Congress* will not be ready in less than six or seven days, in the mean time we are filling up our water & provisions.

I left Commo Rodgers on Monday last off sandy Hook.-I beg to be informed whether I am again to proceed to New York. I have the honor to be [&c.]

Stephen Decatur

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 18.

The Frigate *Essex*

Commodore Rodgers planned a sortie from New York immediately after the United States declared war on Great Britain. During late May and most of June, all efforts were made to prepare the ships of his squadron for a long cruise. There was a disappointment, however. Master Commandant David Porter's Essex *had developed a reputation of sailing poorly, and Porter himself was most concerned.*[1] *He was handicapped as it was by his ship having guns of only one major caliber and type, 32-pound carronades, which were only effective at short range. As* Essex *had lost some of her speed, she might have been an easy catch for a fast sailing British frigate with long-range cannon. Porter wrote to Commodore Rodgers on 31 May, bringing the problem to his attention and officially requesting that* Essex's *spars and masts be altered. In another letter, Rodgers addressed Secretary of the Navy Hamilton, recommending that Porter's suggestions be carried out. For Porter, the delay was to prove fruitful, for he finally went on a highly successful independent cruise, while Rodgers' squadron had disappointing luck.*

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[1] *In 1812,* Essex *was thirteen years old and had been refitted and to some extent rebuilt several times. She had at one time been considered the most beautiful and fastest frigate of her size. For fascinating background on the building of the ship, see P. C. F. Smith,* The Frigate Essex Papers: Building the Salem Frigate, 1798-1799 *(Salem, 1974).*

COMMODORE JOHN RODGERS TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

U. S. Frigate *President*
Staten Island
4th June 1812

Sir

I am sorry to state to you that the *Essex*, from some cause, or other; at present sails very badly, so much so that I am sure the *President* not only out sails her very much in every way, but I am certain that a little off the wind she would run her out of sight in 12 or 14 hours. The *Essex* is no doubt badly sparred: as Captn Porter represents in the enclosed letter, also that her bottom is either very foul, or the Copper defective: perhaps both. I should therefore recommend that she be hove out, and that, if no change of her present yards should be deemed necessary, she be furnished at least with a new fore mast of longer dimensions than the one she has at present: also that her present old yards may be altered so as to correspond with the proportions of her masts.

Sailing as the *Essex* does at present, altho' she is in other respects in complete order, her services could not be calculated on, in the event of a War.

I presume, with exertion, that the alterations, proposed by Captn Porter, could be made in twenty days at furthest, and that they would not be attended with much expence, as they might principally be done by her own Crew. With the greatest respect [&c.]

Jn^{O} Rodgers

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 10.

[Enclosure][1]

U. S. Frigate *Essex*
31st May 1812

Sir,

The great disproportion between the Masts, Spars, Rigging and Hull of the *Essex* constitute in the opinion of the most experienced commanders in the Navy, her greatest defect and it is the belief of those who are best acquainted with her that an additional length of lower

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masts with some alterations in her spars would greatly improve her sailing. fully persuaded of the correctness of those opinions and believing them to coincide with your own, I take the liberty to address you on the subject and enclose to you such dimensions as will enable you to calculate the alterations necessary to be made.

In my opinion it would not be necessary to incur much expence, nor would muct [*much*] time be required: as the Main Mast could be shifted forward for a Fore Mast, and the same Yards, Top Masts, and sails, would answer with a little alteration.

I shall not urge any further reasons for soliciting permission to make the above stated alterations persuaded as I am that you are already convinced of their necessity. I have the honor

D Porter

PS I beg leave to observe that the fore mast of the *Essex* has for some time been considered defective on account of its twisting occasioned from weakness and that it would be necessary that she should be creened before she proceeded on a cruize of any length.

Commre John Rodgers
Comdg
U S Frigate *President*

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 10.

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1 In addition to the letter which Rodgers enclosed with his own correspondence, Porter wrote a separate letter to the secretary of the navy emphasizing the necessity of the repairs. See Porter to Hamilton, 3 June 1812, DNA, RG45, MC, 1812, Vol. 1, No. 55.

Lieutenant Perry Requests an Assignment

Oliver Hazard Perry was stationed at Newport, Rhode Island, in charge of gunboats when the war broke out. He had suffered the misfortune of losing a vessel, due to a pilot's misjudgment, in Long Island Sound in January 1811. The following letter indicates that reassignment to a more active command was uppermost in his mind.

Reassignment would show that the Navy Department still had faith in his potential. Perry was not named to command the ships in Lake Erie for several months. Events in the following year were to prove that Perry did indeed have the qualities he was so anxious to demonstrate.

Lieutenant Oliver H. Perry to Secretary of the Navy Hamilton

New Port June 6th 1812

Sir

As War appears now to be enivitable and not far distant, I hope and earnestly entreat that I may in that event be called immediately into actual service. I am highly sensible Sir, of the very great favor which you have shown in suffering me to remain the last twelve months with my family-although this indulgence has been the source of much happiness: in case of war it would cease to be so, on the contrary I should consider it the greatest mortification and misfortune.

Pardon me for troubling you Sir, on this subject, as I solicited this station some time since when there was no prospect of war, I am desirous should such a thing take place to prevent the possibility of a thought entering your mind that it would be agreeable to continue at home. The time appears to be near when I shall have it in my power to convince you Sir, that the observation in your letter to Comr Rodgers relative to the loss of the *Revenge* viz. "an officer just to himself, and to his country will not be depressed by defeat, or misfortune, but will be stimulated by either cause, to greater exertions" has made a proper impression on my mind.[1] I have the honor [&c.]

O. H. Perry

ALS, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 14.

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[1] Hamilton to Rodgers, 7 Feb. 1811, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 9, pp. 280-81. Rodgers reported the loss of *Revenge* to Hamilton in Rodgers to Hamilton, 9 Jan. and 10 Jan. 1811, DNA, RG45, CL, 1811, Vol. 1, Nos. 22 and 23.

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Ordnance Requirements at Charleston, Wilmington, and Boston

At the beginning of the war, almost all naval stations were desperately short of supplies. Letters from station commanders reporting deficiencies are important historical documents because they catalog the myriad necessities of naval warfare. Upon receipt of such requisitions, the secretary of the navy would frequently pass the request to Commodore Tingey at the Washington Navy Yard, which usually had large stocks of most necessities. If this resource failed, orders were sent out to navy agents in the appropriate regions, instructing them to contract with commercial or industrial firms to supply the navy's needs. In the two letters which follow, Captain John Dent of Charleston and Wilmington, and Captain William Bainbridge of the Boston Navy Yard reported their urgent need for ordnance stores and other items.

CAPTAIN JOHN H. DENT TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Charleston 4 June. 1812

Sir,

I had the honor to receive your letter of the 25th ult. and herewith enclose a requisition for Such Stores as are immediately wanted on this and Wilmington Stations.

No 9 Will be so far ready on Sunday as to take her Station in the roads, and receive the men recruited for the barges, four of which will be ready this week for Service. I think it necessary that *No 9* Should have a few Marines on board to prevent desertion. She has mounted Six 6 long 32 and 2 Nine pounders, and will fight them to great advantage, having more room than the *Vixen*. I Have the honor [&c.]

J H Dent

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 9.

[Enclosure]

Required for the use of the Charleston and Wilmington Stations, the following Stores.

Gunners Department.

400	Barrels Powder
50	Ditto Priming do
300	Wt Match Rope
36	powder horns with priming Wires
200	Muskets with Cartouch boxes
150	pair pistols with Do. Do.
200	Sabres
200	Boarding pikes
200	Battle Axes
24	Spunges & Rammers for 32 pounders.
24	Ditto Ditto . . . 24 Do
24	Ditto Ditto . . . 18 do
24	do 12 pound Carronades
50	dressed Sheep Skins for Spunges
12	Gun locks for 32 pounders
2	Setts of Copper Weights & Measures
4	Gun Scrapers for 32 pounders
4	Ditto do . . . 24 do
4	Ditto do . . . 18 "
4	Ditto do . . . 12 "
4	Ditto do . . . 9 "
1	Galley Complete for *No 9*
6	Small Do for Barges
20	pieces blue Bunting
20	Do red do
20	do white do
6	do yellow do
2	Anchors. 18 cwt Mooring Anchors for *No 9*.
1	do stream 11 cwt for Do
6	Spare Anchors for Brigs
6	Spare Cables from 11 to 14 inches
	Hawsers from 3 to 7 inches
	Cordage running rigging
	Canvass Assorted
	Twine Ditto

Iron Ditto
Shot
500 Stand of Grape. for 32 pounders.
400 do . . Do . . 18 do
400 do . . do . . 12 do
200 . . . Cannister. . 12 do
An assortment of medicine
1. Sett of Amputating Instruments for Wilmington Station.

J H Dent

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 9.

Captain William Bainbridge to Secretary of the Navy Hamilton

Navy Yard Charlestown
5th June 1812

Sir,

I have the honor to inform you, that I have had all the Powder belonging to the Navy Department, that is in the Boston Magazine proved, the following quantity has been condemmd. Viz.

146	Casks containing	14600 lbs	
31	Do -----	2985	part of the *J. Adams*'s
23	do -----	2229	part of the *Chesapeak*s
	Pound	19814	

From the *Chesapeake*s Stores there is about 9900 lbs and from the *John Adams* 6400 lbs which has stood the proof & is fit for Service. Be pleased to inform whether the above quantity of damaged Powder is to be sold or remanufactured. I shall move the good powder from the State Magazine into the U.S. Magazine to save expence of Storage & to have it more convenient-the damage I shall not move until I hear from you on the Subject. I have the honor [&c.]

Wm Bainbridge

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 12.

The Need for a Navy Wharf at Charlestown

A common complaint among naval officers was the high cost of fitting out and repairing the navy's ships at commercial yards. A good part of these excess costs was spent in the rental of storage warehouses and wharves from private firms. In the following letter, Captain Bainbridge makes the point that a navy wharf will be even more essential with the coming of war. Whatever the worth of his argument, the wharf was not built during his tenure as commandant.

Captain William Bainbridge to Secretary of the Navy Hamilton

Navy Yard Charlestown
10 June 1812

Sir

I have the honor to inform you that from Several estimates which I have received, a good Wharf can be made at this Navy Yard for 20,000 Dollars, and can be compleated by Septr next: The almost indespensible necessity, and great public benefit of having a Wharf here has been so frequently reiterated by me as to make a repetition unnecessary. I will meerly observe that the present period is favourable for building a Wharf, and that if it was begun immediately it would lessen the expence of repairing the *Chesapeake* and in the event of War, our Ships might be necessiated to resort to this Port for repairing damages received in Battle in which event the cost of the Wharf would soon be remunerated

There are Several hundred Tons of Timber lying in decay in the Pond here entirely unfit for Ship purposes, and will be lost except it is put into a Wharf. The Wharf would be so constructed, at some future period would facilitate the making a dry Dock here. A Rough Sketch of the dimensions of the proposed Wharf is at bottom.[1] I have the honor Sir [&c.]

W^{m} Bainbridge

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 24.

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[1] The sketch shows a wharf 600 feet long, 60 feet wide at water's edge and 80 feet wide at the other end.

Ships in Ordinary at Washington Navy Yard

The 28-gun frigate Adams *was one of the several ships built at the onset of the Quasi-War with France in 1799. After service in that conflict and in the first year of the Tripolitan War,* Adams *was ordered to the Washington Navy Yard where her crew was paid off. The ship was then laid up in ordinary along with the frigates* New York *and* Boston *for several years, to be maintained by workmen at the Washington Navy Yard. She served as a receiving ship during 1811–1812, but had deteriorated badly. The following letter contains Commodore Tingey's thoughts on her condition.*

COMMODORE THOMAS TINGEY TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Navy Yard Washtn: 13th June 1812

Sir

The Master Shipwright states that "the Ship *Adams* will want such a general repair, that it will be necessary to haul her up; as it is almost impossible to get at the work so low down as it is necessary to go" And requests orders to prepare the ways, if approved.

I have carefully examined this Ship, and feel convinc'd from her extreme state of decay that to repair her afloat, will be by far more expensive than to build a new ship. At the same time it appears extremely doubtful whether in attempting to heave her up, we may not destroy her altogether, all which is respectfully submitted for your consideration.[1] I have the honor [&c.]

Thos: Tingey

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 31.

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[1] After some delay, repairs and rebuilding were commenced. *Adams* was razeed or cut down from a frigate to a corvette, carrying fewer guns but with an additional fifteen feet along the waterline. She later saw useful service in 1814 under Captain Charles Morris.

The Supply of "Slops"

A word frequently used in contemporary documents to describe the working uniform of 1812 sailors was "slops," yet rarely does a writer bother to explain what the word meant. The following document is unusual in that it does explain what "Slop Clothing" was and how it was distributed. It was common for ships' pursers to sell clothing to ships' personnel at a slight markup, pocketing the difference as a commission.

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON TO PURSER SAMUEL HAMBLETON

Saml Hambleton Esqr
St Michaels, E Shore Md

Nav: Depm't
15 June 1812

I have received Your letter, of the 8. inst. The Navy agent at N York, has made a contract, with Mr [Seth G.] Macy of Hudson, for a considerable supply, of blue cloth, for navy use; I wish such cloth used in preference to any other.

On your arrival at N York You will make a requisition on the Navy agent, for such supply of Slop Clothing, as may be necessary who will accordingly furnish such supply.

The following, are considered articles of the first necessity, & what is generally understood, by the term, Slop Clothing, viz.

Common Hatts
pea Jacketts
Cloth Jacketts
Duck Jacketts
Cloth. & Duck Trowsers
Duck frocks
Guernsey ditto
Check Shrts
Com: Shoes
Stockings
Blankets
Mattresses

In order to enable You safely to keep these articles, you will be allowed, at the public expense, a suitable room: & You will also be allowed a room, in which to keep Your accounts.

Each of the gunboats will be allowed a steward, & You will be allowed one extra Steward

Upon the articles of Slop Clothing to be issued out by You, to the Crews of the Gunboats stationed at New Port, You may charge to the men to whom You may issue them, a commission of 12½ P.Cent.

The Navy agent at N York, will advance You such sums, not exceeding $2000, as may be required, to enable You, to Provide a supply of Small Stores.

P. Hamilton

Copy, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 10, p. 58.

An Intelligence Report from Decatur

Just two days before the declaration of war, Commodore Stephen Decatur sent Secretary Hamilton a brief report on British cruising procedures on the Bermuda station, along with information concerning the issuance of trading licenses to Americans. The latter subject became one of increasing concern to Decatur and other naval officers, for it was clear that Americans were engaging in trade with the enemy. Yet, the "licensed trade" was not made illegal in the United States until July 1813. One historian has noted that in one month during 1812, the British issued 722 licenses for American grain shipments to Lisbon and Cadiz.[1]

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[1] *Bradford Perkins,* Castlereagh and Adams: England and the United States, 1812-1823 *(Berkeley & Los Angeles, 1964), pp. 8-9, 9n.*

COMMODORE STEPHEN DECATUR TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

U.S.F. *United States*
at sea June 16th 1812

Sir,

Owing to adverse winds, I have been prevented executing your orders until this day. The information I communicated to you, respect-

best copy available

ing the British Naval force at Burmuda was derived from a British Naval Agent the precise force, I have not been informed of. The Admiral does not permit more than two vessels to cruise at a time: those are instructed not to approach our coast nor to continue out, more than fifteen days. I am also informed from a source that is entitled to great credit that the British consul at Norfolk & at other places have now in their offices, which they distribute to those who apply for them, British Licenses,[1] protecting against capture all vessels trading to British ports or the ports of their Allys. I have the honor [&c.]

Stephen Decatur

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 38.

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[1] See Memorandum of Vice Admiral Sawyer "on the Licensed Trade," pp. 202-203.

War Has Begun

On the very day Congress voted to declare war against Great Britain, Secretary of the Navy Hamilton started to warn his officers of this event and of the rights and dangers they would immediately assume as belligerents. Writing to Captain Isaac Hull, he urged him to hasten to New York when ready. There, Commodore John Rodgers was assembling his ships, and those assigned to Commodore Decatur were to form a cruising squadron under Rodgers's flag. According to plan, Hull was to rendezvous with Rodgers off New York, but this was not to be. Rodgers' squadron sailed from Sandy Hook on 21 June, headed in a northeasterly direction. Hull's Constitution *did not depart Chesapeake Bay until 12 July, heading for an unexpected rendezvous of a very different sort.*

Secretary of the Navy Hamilton to Captain Isaac Hull

Navy Departt
June 18th 1812

Sir

This day war has been declared between the "United Empire of Great Britain & Ireland" and their dependencies and the United States

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of America and their territories and you are with the force under your command entitled to every belligerent right to attack and capture, and to defend-You will use the utmost dispatch to reach New York after you have made up your complement of men &c at Annapolis-In your way from thence, you will not fail to notice the british flag, should it present itself—I am informed that the *Belvidere* is on our coast, but you are not to understand me as impelling you to battle, previously to your having confidence in your crew unless attacked, or with a reasonable prospect of success, of which you are to be at your discretion the Judge-You are to reply to this and inform me of your progress[1]
Respectfully yrs

Paul Hamilton

Capt Hull U S Frigate *Constitution*

ALS, DNA, RG45, AF 7, 1812.

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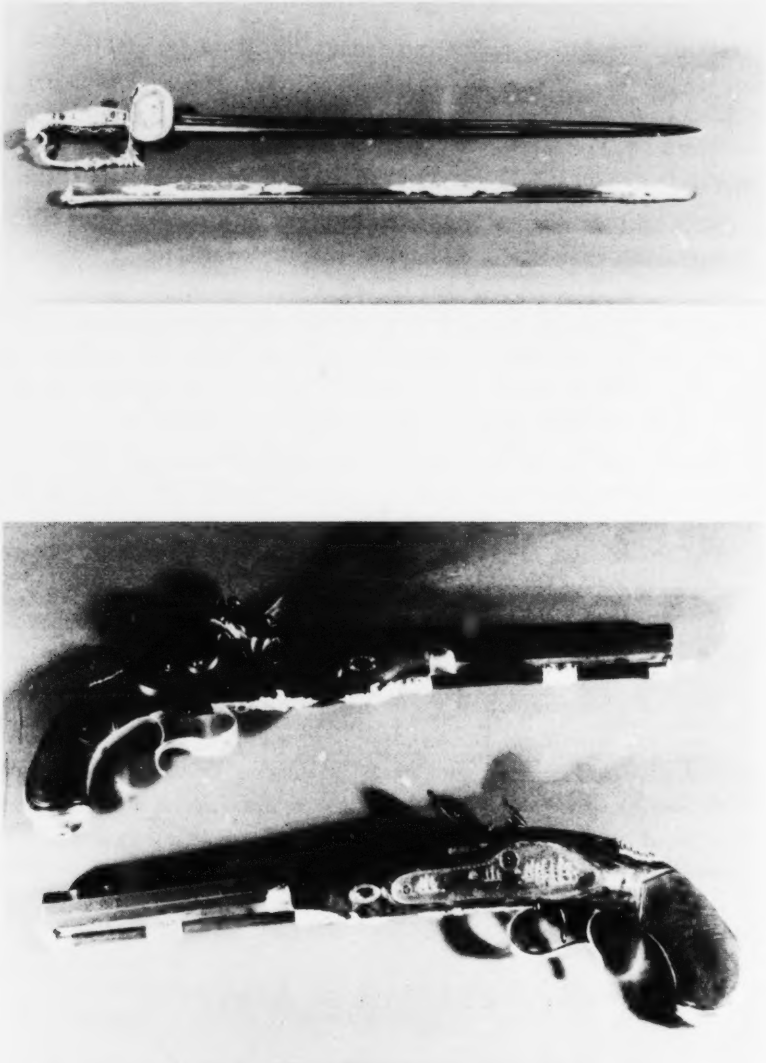
[1] At the moment, *Constitution* was engaged in shakedown cruises in Chesapeake Bay after an extensive refitting.

Intelligence and the Element of Surprise

One day after the declaration of war in Washington and one day before that news arrived in New York, Commodore Rodgers was optimistic about the U.S. Navy's chances against British warships then stationed along the American coast. He had learned that there were no more than two dozen enemy ships between Halifax and Bermuda and wanted to strike while opposing forces were relatively balanced. To do this required rapid deployment as soon as the war commenced. This would enable his squadron to take advantage of the many days or weeks that might elapse before British warships received official word on the declaration of war. Rodgers' squadron was ready, and he lost no time in getting to sea two days later to seize this unparalleled opportunity.



Captain Isaac Hull's Sword and Pistols

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COMMODORE JOHN RODGERS TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

U.S. Frigate *President*
New York 19th June 1812

Sir

Since writing you last I have ascertained, & I think from a source that may be depended on, that the British naval force at present on this side the Atlantic consists of one sixty four-seven frigates-seven sloops of war-seven Brigs, & two or three schooners-Hallifax & Bermuda are their ports of rendezvous; & permit me to observe, Sir, that should war be declared, & our vessels get to sea, in squadron, before the British are apprised of it; I think it not impossible that we may be able to cripple & reduce their force in detail; to such an extent as to place our own upon a footing until their loss could be supplied by a reinforcment from England.

The *President* & *Hornet* are ready for sea & the *Essex* will I hope be ready in ten days from this date.

It is this moment reported that the frigates *UStates* & *Congress* are off the Bar. The British frigate *Belvidera* & Sloop of War *Tartarus* were seen off Sandy Hook yesterday morning-The schooner *Mackerel* with Mr Ruff (the English messenger) sailed last evening for Hallifax. With the greatest respect [&c.]

Jn^{o} Rodgers

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 42.

Recruitment of Marines

On the eve of the war, the Marine Corps was badly understrength and had little prospect of attracting recruits. Several months before, Congress passed legislation to strengthen the army which contained attractive rewards for those willing to take up arms.[1] *As an enlistment bounty, each recruit was to receive sixteen dollars, half at time of enlistment and the rest when mustered. As a bonus, however, each soldier who received a certificate of faithful service at the time he was discharged would receive a lump sum equivalent to three months pay* *and 160 acres of land. Likewise, if the soldier was killed in action or died "in the service of the United States," his heirs would receive the bonus. This placed the Marine Corps at a severe disadvantage, for there was no comparable system of rewards for enlisting in the marines at that time. In June, Secretary of the Navy Hamilton attempted to make enlistment in the Marine Corps more attractive.*

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1. *Peters, "An Act for Completing the Existing Military Establishment" of 24 Dec. 1811, and "An Act to Raise an Additional Military Force" of 11 Jan. 1812,* Public Statutes at Large, *II: 669-70, 671-74.*

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON TO LIEUTENANT COLONEL COMMANDANT FRANKLIN WHARTON, U.S.M.C.

Navy Dept
19th June, 1812

Sir,

After having performed your business at N York-you will proceed to Hudson.

Congress having offered extraordinary inducements to Soldiers to enter the army, it becomes proper that some additional inducement should be offered to persons to enter the Marine Corps. You will therefore consider yourself at liberty-to allow to each man who shall enter the Corps-Twenty dollars bounty-: of which 10$ are to be paid at the time of signing the articles-& 10$ on their being first mustered. I am Sir [&c.]

Paul Hamilton

ALS, DNA, RG127, CMC, Letters Received.

Army-Navy Relations

In anticipation of shortages in munitions that were likely to occur, Secretary of the Navy Hamilton requested officers in charge of naval stations at various points to cooperate with army commands. Interservice rivalries flourished despite common needs and goals. An occa-

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sional reminder of the need for collaboration with the army was essential, as can be seen from the following circular letter sent by the Navy Department.

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON TO SELECTED OFFICERS

Circular

Navy Dept
20 June 1812

Capt John Shaw Esqr Commanding at N. Orleans
Capt John H. Dent " at Charleston
Capt. H. G. Campbell " at St. Mary's G.a.
T. N. Gautier " at Wilmington
Capt Ch. Gordon " at Baltimore M.d.
Capt Alexr Murray " at Philadelphia
Lt O. H. Perry " at New Port R I.

In order to provide against a deficiency in the munitions of war, either on the part of the War, or Navy Departments; it has been agreed between the Secretary of War, and myself; that if on any occasion, the army should be deficient in its supply of any of the munitions of war, & the navy should have such munitions on hand, they are, upon the requisition of the Officer Commanding the Army, to be furnished out of the Navy supply; & if the Navy, should in like manner be deficient, the Army Officers will upon like requisition, from the Commanding Navy Officer, furnish such supply.

Indeed a mutual interchange of civilities of every kind, will become, in the event of exigencies arising, an obvious duty of patriotism.

Paul Hamilton

Copy, DNA, RG45, CGO, Vol. 1, p. 93.

Medical Care for the Navy

Prompt and capable attention to the medical needs of ships' crews was a matter of concern to the Navy Department. A small corps of *surgeons and surgeon's mates had been established for the Continental Navy and was later renewed in the "Act to Provide a Naval Armament" in 1794. The six frigates authorized by this legislation were each assigned a surgeon. On the four large frigates, two surgeon's mates were also assigned, but the small ships were to have only one. Five years later, "An Act for the Government of the Navy of the United States" anticipated future provisions for sick bays on warships, stating, "a convenient place shall be set apart for the sick or hurt men, to which they are to be removed, with their hammocks and bedding when the surgeon shall advise the same to be necessary, and some of the crew shall be appointed to attend them . . . ."*[1] *Although no naval hospitals were built before the War of 1812, it was customary for the navy to rent rooms or houses for this purpose when there was an urgent need. Since 1799, a small portion of the pay of officers, seamen, and marines had been deducted and invested in the Marine Hospital Fund, but in 1811, the Navy Department established a separate fund that eventually led to the building of several naval hospitals in the 1830s.*

American naval medicine was in its infancy during the War of 1812, but impetus for its growth and improvement came from the surgeons themselves. Fortunately, there were several energetic medical officers who took the lead at this time, including Dr. Edward Cutbush, Dr. Lewis Heermann, and Dr. Usher Parsons. The letter that follows is an example of Dr. Cutbush's contribution.

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[1] *Callan & Russell,* Laws . . . of the Navy, *p. 109; see article 15.*

SURGEON EDWARD CUTBUSH TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Philada June 21 1812

Sir,

An improvement in Surgeons' needles, for the purpose of taking up deep seated arteries in wounds, has been made in this City, which I conceive of so much consequence, that I think it worthy of being submitted to your consideration, in order that they may be added to the instruments allowed to Naval Surgeons.[1] The gentleman, who has made the improvement, has not yet given publicity to it, in any of our periodical publications, the surgeons of the Navy have not, therefore, become acquainted with it, otherwise I am confident that they would be solicitous to be possessed of them. I have ordered a case on my private account, the cost of which is not to exceed $10, they may be

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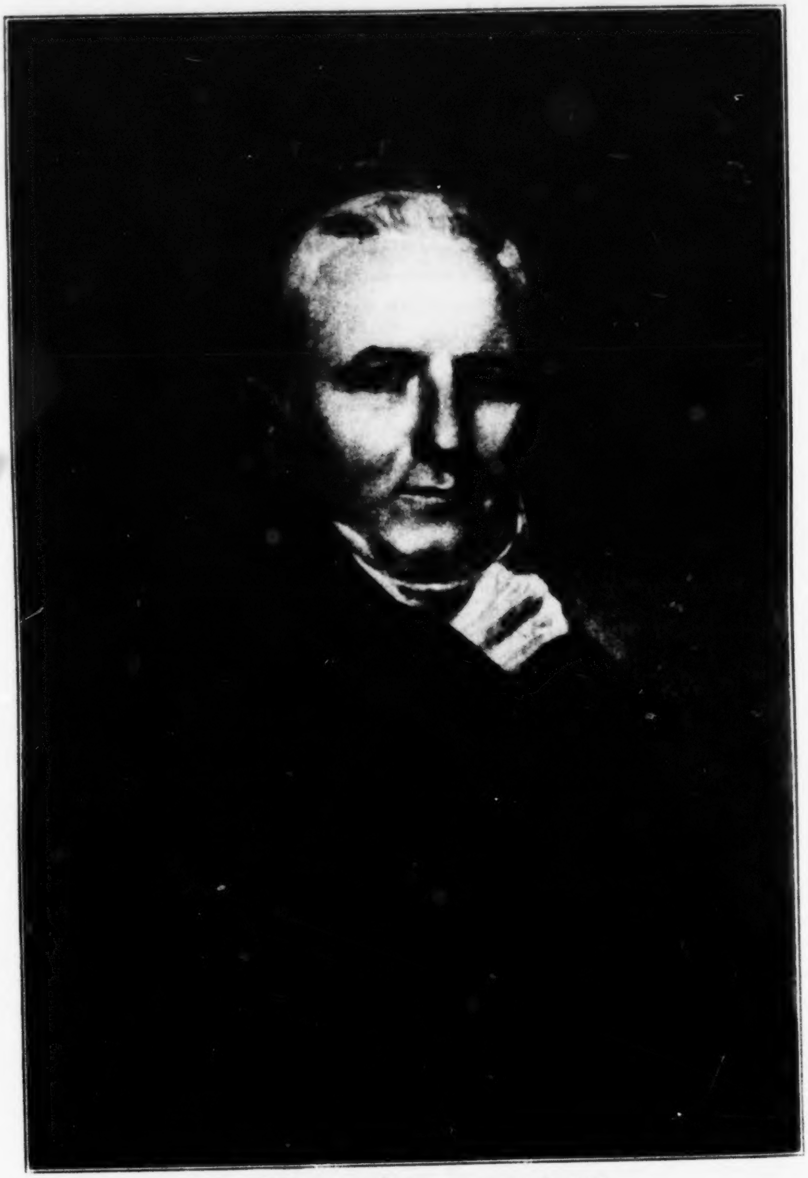

Dr. Edward Cutbush, Surgeon, U.S.N.

made, however, in a plainer style and of cheaper materials for 5 or 6 dollars per case. I have the honor [&c.]

E Cutbush[2]

ALS, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 45.

[1] Secretary Hamilton replied indirectly to Cutbush's suggestion in a letter of 24 June to George Harrison, navy agent, Philadelphia, asking Harrison to thank the doctor, and giving his permission to obtain and distribute the number of needles required. See Hamilton to Harrison, 24 June 1812, DNA, RG45, MLS, Vol. 11, p. 108.

[2] Edward Cutbush, M.D., (1772-1843) attended Philadelphia College and served his internship at the Pennsylvania Hospital, graduating in 1794. He was a founding member of the Medical Society of Philadelphia and served as surgeon general of the Pennsylvania Line during the Whiskey Rebellion. On 28 May 1799, he was appointed surgeon in the United States Navy, and received orders to join the frigate *United States* flagship of Commodore John Barry. At the time of this letter, Cutbush was the senior surgeon of the navy. See F. L. Pleadwell, "Edward Cutbush, M.D., The Nestor of the Medical Corps of the Navy," *Annals of Medical History*, Vol. V, No. 4 (Dec. 1923): 337-86.

Repairs for *Essex*

Commodore John Rodgers's and Master Commandant David Porter's letters convinced the secretary that Essex *stood in need of an emergency overhaul to improve her sailing qualities. Porter sailed up to the New York Navy Yard from Sandy Hook and placed his ship under the auspices of Captain Isaac Chauncey, commandant of the Navy Yard. Chauncey's artificers, with the assistance of the ship's crew, accomplished the necessary work in three weeks, a remarkably short time for work of this type.* Essex *was ready for sea by the first week of July. The letter which follows contains Chauncey's statement as to the work that had been done.*

Captain Isaac Chauncey to Secretary of the Navy Hamilton

Navy Yard New York
22 June 1812

Sir,

The *Essex* has been completely calked inside and out, both sides hove out, her copper all repaired, a false keel put on her, and is now with all her ballast on board, and nearly all her water Casks Stored. Yesterday (Sunday) we took all her masts out, and by 12 O'clock to day her Main Mast will have been altered for a foremast and stepped. Her Main and Mizen Masts will be completed by Thursday and I think by Saturday that she will be completely ready for Sea. Nineteen GunBoats will go down today ready to co-operate with the Ships or Forts. I have the honor [&c.]

Isaac Chauncey

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 52.

The Need for Spars

The requirement for operational readiness in all ships capable of action produced demands for materiel that were not easily met. The 36-gun frigate Congress *had been laid up at the Washington Navy Yard after the Tripolitan War, along with* Adams, New York, *and* Boston. *Being in somewhat better condition than these ships, she was recommissioned in the fall of 1811 under the command of Captain John Smith. By June 1812,* Congress *was sailing as part of Commodore Stephen Decatur's squadron out of Norfolk. In the following letter, Commodore Tingey requests spars for* Congress, *as he had used all those previously available to fit out other ships, including* Constitution.

Commodore Thomas Tingey to Secretary of the Navy Hamilton

Navy Yard Washn: 22d June 1812

Sir

Of my Requisition for 105 Black Spruce Spars of October last, refer'd to the Navy Agent [Samuel Storer] at Portland, ninety three came to the Yard in February. The remaining 12 are now materially wanted. And, as we have used some of the longest of those received at that time (for the frigate *Constitution*) The Mast maker that the number to be yet forwarded may be augmented so as to amount to the following particulars vizt

				inches				inches			
10	Spars	67	feet	15	diatr	5	Spars	48	feet	16	diamtr
8	do	60	"	14	do	5	do	45	do	12	do
5	do	52	"	12	do	6	do	44	do	16	do
5	do	49	"	15	do	4	do	36	do	14	do

The diameter to be measured at the middle.

As many of these spars are necessary for the frigate *Congress*, it is desireable that Mr Storer be directed to furnish them immediately: which is respectfully submitted. I have the honor [&c.]

Tho^{s}: Tingey

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 54.

Robert Fulton and the U.S. Navy

Although Robert Fulton's fame has emanated primarily from his development of the steamboat and experiments in canal transportation, he was also an inventor of undersea weapons and a steam warship.[1] *During a long residence in France in the Napoleonic era, Fulton made several experiments with mines which he called "torpedoes." Stimulated by the* Chesapeake-Leopard *incident, Fulton called his experiments to the attention of the Navy Department and arranged a demonstration of his mines at New York in 1810. The results were unsuccessful, but he was not deterred. Soon after the outbreak of war, Fulton reminded Secretary of the Navy Hamilton of his inventions.*

The letter which follows contains his suggestions for their use against British warships.

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1. *Fulton developed what is now considered to be the first steam propelled man-of-war. See Howard I. Chapelle, "Fulton's 'Steam Battery': Blockship and Catamaran," in* United States National Museum Bulletin 240: Contributions from the Museum of History and Technology *(Washington, D.C., 1964), pp. 139-76. He entered into an interesting correspondence with several leading naval officers, including Stephen Decatur and David Porter. Selections from these documents will be published in a later volume.*

ROBERT FULTON TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

New York June 22d 1812

Sir,

Before the termination of the present War we may expect a visit from British ships of war in this port; and I should like to be prepared for such an event in the best manner I can–There is yet 2500$ due on the mony appropriated to Torpedo experiments. If you think proper to send it to me, and I do not use it in a manner satisfactory to Congress, I will always be responsible to refund it. My intention is with that Sum to construct 10 or 12 Torpedoes with all their apperatus and of such a size as to do execution. Also to make some preperation for Using them

When Mr Barlow[1] left Washington he sent to the Navy Yard, and I believe in Boxes all my various apperatus for Torpedoes and My machine for Cutting Cables.[2] will you have the goodness to give orders that they be carefully packed, and the whole materials Sent to me in the first trader from Georgetown or Alexandria to New York, Also my Row Boat?

To promote these experiments, Which if successful go direct to diminish British influence over the seas and to Accomplish the great object of our solicitude, A reasonable freedom of commerce. There should be either a corps organized and encouraged by a premium per gun for every vessel of an enemy they could destroy, Or there should be a premium established by law of 2000$ a gun for all vessels of an enemy which could be destroyed by any means, and then we might find in our ports men of enterprise a kind of Sea fencibles who would exercise themselves and watch every opportunity to attack or annoy the enemy, With so great an object in View it would be policy in congress to give great encouragement 2000$ a gun and that for the guns the vessel is rated is as little as the reward, in the commencement should be; for then a 20 gun vessel would yield 40,000 and an 80 gun-Ship 160,000. Admitting this mode practicable and nothing has proved that it is not so, How can government get rid of 74 or 80 Gun Ships so Cheap as by this means? Is it not worth a million of dollars, only to prove that a vessel of War can be blown up Vi & Armis?

Would it not also be good policy to publish a reward offering the whole value of the ship in cash to any crew who would bring one in and deliver her to our officers; or one fourth of her value for stranding and Burning her on our coast. The men to have an Asylum in our country; It may be Said Such is not honorable war. But is war confined within the limits of honor? the British by pressing american Citizens and compelling them to fight against their Brethren have not consulted Honor, the Laws of Nations or humanity, but simply their own convenience or caprice, every thing in these times to weaken the enemy and defeat them on our coast is Right. and for War sufficiently Honorable. have the goodness to favour me with an answer as soon as convenient, I have sir the honor to be [&c.]

Rob^{t} Fulton

ALS, DNA, RG45, MLR, 1812, Vol. 4, No. 132.

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1. Joel Barlow (1754–1812), a poet and statesman who befriended Fulton and financed some of his experiments.

2. For documents relating to Fulton's experiments with torpedoes and cable cutting equipment, see "Experiments on the Practical Use of the Torpedo," *ASP, Naval Affairs*, I: 234–45. An appreciation of Fulton's contributions to naval warfare may be seen in Wallace S. Hutcheon, Jr., *Robert Fulton, Pioneer of Undersea Warfare* (Annapolis, Md., 1981).

Orders Sent but Not Received

Having had from two to three weeks to consider the cruising strategies proposed by Commodores Rodgers and Decatur, Secretary Hamilton finally decided that it would be better for Rodgers to keep the two divisions separate. He ordered them to cruise in this manner off their respective stations, New York and Norfolk, occasionally meeting. They were not to join forces unless they expected to meet a *superior force. It is also apparent that Hamilton expected his commodores to keep relatively close to the coast, between Norfolk and the New England states, in order to protect merchant ships that would soon be returning to their home ports. Secretary Hamilton embodied this policy in a letter addressed to Commodore Rodgers one day after he departed with his squadron on a cruise that extended far across the Atlantic. Rodgers did not learn of the missed orders until his return in September.*

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON TO COMMODORE JOHN RODGERS

Nav Dep' 22 June 1812.

Comr Rodgers
New York

For the present, it has been judged expedient, so to employ our public armed vessels, as to afford to our returning commerce, all possible protection-nationally, & individually. The safe return of our commercial vessels, is obviously of the highest importance.

To accomplish this object, as far as may be in your power, you will, without doubt, exert your utmost means, & consult your best judgment: The Vessels under you command, will consist of

The frigate *President*
Essex
J. Adams
Hornet
Nautilus

Your general cruising ground, for the present, will be, from the Capes of the Chesapeake Eastwardly: Comre Decatur, with the frigates *United States*, the *Congress*, & the *Argus*, having the same object in view, will for the present, cruise from N York Southwardly: with this arrangement, the two squadrons may occasionally meet between the Hook & the Capes of the Chesapeake-& if on such occasions, an object of sufficient importance should present itself, our whole force could be concentrated for the purpose of effecting it. The great bulk of our returning commerce, will make for the ports between the Chesapeake, & our Eastern extremities-& in the protection to be afforded such ports are to be considered, as claiming particular attention.

It will be all important, that yourself & Comre. Decatur, should not only conduct your operations, in perfect harmony, but that each should know, as far as may be practicable, the intended operations of the other-Having one object in view, you will consult together, in order that you may the more effectually accomplish it.

By all safe opportunities, which I hope, may frequently occur, you will write to me, apprising me of all your movements-I shall occasionally write to you, & direct my letters to N York, N Port, Boston & sometimes Norfolk. As to the disposition of the vessels under your immediate command, consult your own best judgment. When you shall judge it expedient sail in squadron, with the whole in company; when in your opinion, a different arrangement may promise more success detach them, either singly, or two in company. I will, on this point, merely intimate to you my opinion, that it may not be prudent, for the vessels to sail singly, & that it may be well for all the vessels occasionally to concentrate-& put into port, for further instructions.

Referring to the patriotic feelings, with which it is known, that the bosoms of our officers are highly animated-& to those sentiments which special causes have excited-it appears proper, from prudential considerations, to say to you; that, possessing as you do, every Belligerent right of capture, attack & defence, still you are not voluntarily to encounter a force superior to your own-I know, that I need not say to you, that you are not to fly from an equal-& you are not to yield to a Superior without using your best exertions to repel him-nor need I remind you of the precious effects, which victory will procure.

You are now Sir, in possession of the present views of the Government, in relation to the employment of our vessels of war-Go forth then, under the assurance, that in your valor & discretion every confidence is placed; & may the God of battles be with you, & with all our beloved Countrymen.

P Hamilton

You will be together, & constitute one squadron, when in your opinion, a Superior force may be expected; & you will look to N York, in the latter case, if too Strong for you, as to a place, of safety the most eligible.

Copy, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 10, p. 69-70.

East Florida and the War of 1812

By the end of May 1812, with Congress about to debate the issue of war or peace, the United States' position on East Florida hardened. If there were war with Great Britain, there was a distinct possibility that British troops would land to reinforce the Spanish in East Florida. One of the conditions under which Congress had voted to occupy East Florida was to forestall occupation of that province by a "foreign power." The troops that were already there through the intrigues of Brigadier General Mathews had been ordered withdrawn, if the Spanish would agree to guarantee the safety of the rebels. But since the Spanish refused to negotiate that issue and there were rumors of preparations for a landing of British troops, the U.S. position had become more legitimate. On 27 May, Secretary of State Monroe reminded Governor Mitchell of Georgia that he should not withdraw the troops under these conditions. He also reassured Mitchell that orders would be sent "to the commander of the naval force of the United States in the neighborhood of East Florida to give you any assistance, in case of emergency which you may think necessary and require."[1]

In the following letter, sent five days after the United States declared war on Great Britain, Governor Mitchell requested reinforcements from Captain Campbell in expectation of an attack from the Spanish at St. Augustine. For those in the United States who saw in war an opportunity to expand national territory, the time seemed propitious.

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[1] *Monroe to Mitchell, 27 May 1812,* ASP, Foreign Relations, *III: 573; Hamilton to Campbell, 27 May 1812, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 10, p. 66.*

GOVERNOR DAVID B. MITCHELL TO CAPTAIN HUGH G. CAMPBELL

St. Marys 23d June 1812

Dear Sir,

I have this moment received a letter from Colonel Smith in which he states, that he has received information that the Spaniards in St Augustine are fitting out two Large schooners mounting each twelve six pounders and one sixteen pounder for the purpose of entering the St John's and attacking our Gun Boats, and that a reinforcement of one hundred Black troops had been received from the Havanna, and more expected. I am therefore under the necessity of requesting that you will order at least three Gun Boats, or four if you think proper, into the St John's to prevent the ill consequences that would result from an attack by water in the rear of our troops by a force so great as that said to be fitting out for the purpose. I am Dear Sir [&c.]

(Signd) D. B. Mitchell

Commodore Campbell
A true Copy
Loring Pepoon Clerk

Copy, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 67a (enclosure).

Gunboats for the Carolinas

Having received news of the declaration of war between the United States and Great Britain, Master Commandant Evans's next letter to Secretary Hamilton was largely concerned with gunboats recently dispatched to Ocracoke Inlet, North Carolina, problems in manning gunboats that had been readied, and the need for early intelligence of British warships if they should appear off the Virginia Capes.

MASTER COMMANDANT SAMUEL EVANS TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Navy Yard Gosport
24 June 1812

Sir,

I had the honor to receive your letters of the 19th and 20th inst. to day[1]-The orders contained in them shall be executed with all the zeal and abilities I possess.

On Sunday last I dispatched Gun Boat *No 149* for Ocracock; To day the Pilot has returned from her and informs me she only put to Sea yesterday, and as it now blows a gale from the Southd, I think it is probable she will return, in which case I shall feel a reluctance to dispatch her again until I receive your orders, as it is reported here that the British Frigate *Belvidere* is off the Capes, and that advice has been forwarded to her of the declaration of War.

I have this day received a letter from Mr [Lewis B.] Page the Senior Sailing Master of the four Boats that first Sailed for Ocracock. He informs me they have all arrived safe after a passage of three days. He states that a Surgeon is much wanted there as the crews of all the Boats begin to be very sickly and that he has been obliged to employ a Doctor for two of his Men already-I enclose you a Copy of the Instructions I gave to the Commanders of the Boats on their leaving this for Ocracock, and beg to know whether they are to receive their instructions hereafter through me, and whether they are to remain there after the period I have instructed them to.

I regret that I have to state to you that there is now scarcely a possibility to procure a Seaman here. It is said there is not more than twenty in Norfolk, and none of them will enter-On any Sudden emmergency Volunteers might I think be obtained to Man the few Boats here, was I authorised to receive them, but I apprehend they would not be content to remain on board the boats long.

As there will only be four boats ready for Service when *No 67* is repaired, I have considered it advisable to inform the Builder of the Boats now on the Stocks that they must be launched immediately. If I have been incorrect in doing this, it can be remedied by you as I expect they will not be enabled to procure hands and commence on them, in less than a week or ten days.

I beg leave to state to you that I think it would be advisable to have two fast Sailing Pilot-Boats either hired or purchased, to act as look out boats between this and the Capes, until a Telegraph is established.

They might have a Midshipman to Command them, and a few men on board, and would I think furnish us with information of what took place about the Capes more speedily than any other mode that could be now adopted.

Were letters from the Office for me directed to Norfolk I would generally receive them a day earlier than I do, as by the arrangement of the Post Office establishment here the Mails for Portsmouth some days in the week remains in the Office at Norfolk for a day before it is called for. Respectfully I have the honor [&c.]

Sam^{l} Evans

ALS, DNA, RG45, MC, 1812, Vol. 1, No. 65.

1. There are no letters of the 19th or 20th June to Evans in the secretary of the navy's letterbook, but Evans may have been inadvertently omitted as an addressee when the letter was copied into the letterbook. He probably received a letter identical to those sent to other officers announcing the declaration of war and giving specific orders.

Two Narrow Escapes: H.M.S. *Belvidera* and U.S.S. *Constitution*

There is a remarkable similarity in the strategies utilized by the British and American navies at the beginning of the war. It is likely that the British learned of Commodore Rodgers's plan to cruise in squadron soon after he departed New York. To meet this threat, Vice Admiral Herbert Sawyer ordered formation of a British frigate squadron of approximately the same size of Rodgers's, but with the significant addition of H.M.S. Africa, *a 64-gun ship of the line. Rodgers had predicted this outcome in recommending his cruising squadron strategy, but the British squadron under the command of Captain Philip B.V. Broke did not follow Rodgers into the eastern Atlantic.*

After only two days under way, Commodore Rodgers' squadron met the British frigate Belvidera, *36 guns, Captain Richard Byron, sailing alone approximately 100 miles southwest of Nantucket Shoals. Rodgers was in search of a homeward-bound West Indies convoy, but to find a British frigate under these conditions must have seemed too good to be true.* Belvidera *was far outmatched in firepower. She was facing two large 44-gun frigates,* President *and* United States, *and a 36-gun frigate,* Congress, *as well as the sloop* Hornet, *18, and the brig* Argus, *16. Rodgers led the ensuing chase in his* President *and closed to within gunshot, but at that point the skillful Captain Byron managed to resist an engagement at close quarters which would have been fatal for* Belvidera. *The result was a remarkable escape for the British frigate and a disheartening first engagement for Commodore Rodgers whose cruise from that moment on suffered a streak of bad luck. The official accounts of both captains are offered to show the event from differing perspectives.*

Captain Isaac Hull's Constitution *enjoyed a similar but more difficult escape when chased by Commodore Broke's squadron off the New Jersey coast during mid-July. Isaac Hull's report is as suspenseful and* *exciting a document as one can find in the annals of the War of 1812.* Constitution*'s escape proved as uplifting for Hull as* Belvidera*'s escape was disappointing to Rodgers. From this narrow victory, Hull went on to a greater one when he met* Guerriere *off the Grand Banks in August.*

EXTRACT FROM COMMODORE RODGERS'S JOURNAL, U.S.S. *PRESIDENT*, 23 JUNE 1812

June 23rd Pleasant breezes from N.N.W. to W.S.W.: At 3 A.M. spoke an American Brig from Madeira, bound to New York, the Master of which informed me that four days before (in Latd 36° Longd 67°) he had passed a Fleet of British Merchantmen, under convoy of a Frigate and a Brig, steering to the Eastward: I now perceived that this was the Convoy of which I had received intelligence, prior to my leaving New York, and shaped our course East in pursuit of them: At 6 A.M. (Nantucket Shoal bearing N.E. distant 35 leagues) saw a large Sail in the N.E. standing to the S.W. which was soon discovered to be a Frigate: The Signal was now made for a general chase, when the several vessels of the Squadron took in their Studding Sails and made all sail by the wind (on the larboard tack) in pursuit: At 1/4 before 7 the Chase tacked, made all sail, and stood from us, by the wind, on the same tack: At 1/2 past 8 he made signals, when perceiving we were coming up with him he edged away a point, or thereabouts, and set his Top Gallant Studding Sails: At 11 cleared Ship for Action, in the expectation that we should soon be up with the Chase, the breeze about this time however began to incline more to the Westward and became lighter, which I soon discovered was comparitively an advantage to our opponent: At 1/4 past 1 P.M. the Chase hoisted English Colors: At 2. the wind veered to the W.S.W. and became lighter: at 20 minutes past 4 having got within gun shot of the Enemy, when perceiving that he was training his chase guns, and in the Act (as I supposed) of firing, that the breeze was decreasing, and we now sailed so nearly alike, that to afford him an opportunity of doing the first injury to our Spars and rigging, would be to enable him to effect his escape. I gave orders to commence a fire with the bow chase guns, at his spars and rigging, in the hope of crippling one or the other, so far as to enable us to get alongside: the fire from our bow chase guns he instantly returned with those from his Stern, which was now kept up by both Ships without intermission until 30 minutes past 4 P.M. when one of the *Presidents* chase guns burst and killed and wounded sixteen persons, among the latter myself: This was not however the most serious injury, as by the bursting of the Gun, and the explosion of the passing box, from which it was served with powder, both the Main and Forecastle decks (near the Gun) was so much shattered as to prevent the use the Chase Gun, on that side, for some time: our main deck guns being single Shotted, I now gave orders to put our helm to Starboard and fire the starboard broadside, in the expectation of disabling some of his Spars, but did not succeed, altho I could discover that his rigging had sustained considerable damage, and that he had received some injury in the Stern.

I now endeavoured, by altering our course half a point to port and wetting our Sails, to gain a more effective position on his Starboard quarter, but soon found myself losing ground: after this a similar attempt was made at his larboard quarter, but without any better success, as the wind at this time being very light and both Ships sailed so nearly alike that by making an angle of only half a point from the course he steered enabled him to augment his distance: no hope was now left of bringing him to close action, except that derived from being to windward, and the expectation the breeze might favor us first: I accordingly gave orders to steer directly after him, and to keep our bow chase guns playing on his Spars and rigging, until our broadside would more effectually reach him: At 5 finding, from the advantage his stern Guns gave him, that he had done considerable injury to our sails and rigging, and being within point blank shot, I gave orders to put the helm to starboard, and fire our Main deck guns: this broadside did some further damage to his rigging, and I could perceive that his Fore Top Sail Yard was wounded, but the sea was so very smooth, and the wind so light that the injury done was not such as materially to affect his sailing: after this broadside our course was instantly renewed in his wake (under a galling of fire from his stern chase guns, directed at our Spars and rigging) and continued until 1/2 past 6 at which time being within reach of his Grape, and finding our Sails, rigging, and several spars (particularly the Main Yard, which had little left to support it except the lifts & braces) very much disabled, I again gave orders to luff across his stern and give him a couple of broadsides.

The Enemy at this time finding himself so hardly pressed, and seeing, while in the Act of firing, our head sails to lift, and supposing that the Ships had in a measure lost the effect of her helm, he gave a broad yaw with the intention of bringing his broadside to bear: finding the *President* however answered her helm too quick for his purpose, he immediately reassumed his course and precipitately fired his four after main deck guns on the Starboard side, altho they did not bear upon us at the time by 25 or 30 degrees, and he now commenced lightening his Ship by throwing overboard all his boats, waiste, anchors &c &c, and by this means was enabled by 1/4 before 7 to get so far ahead as to prevent our bow chase guns doing execution, and I now perceived with more mortification than words can express, that there was little or no chance left of getting within gun shot of the Enemy again: under every disadvantage of disabled Spars, sails, and rigging I however continued the Chase with all the Sail we could set, until 1/2 past 11 P.M., when perceiving he had gained upwards of three miles, and not the slightest prospect left of coming up with him, I gave up the pursuit and made the Signal to the other Ships, as they came up, to do the same

During the first of the Chase, while the breeze was fresh, and sailing by the wind, I thought the whole of the Squadron gained upon the Enemy: It was soon discoverable however the advantage he acquired by sailing large, and this I concieve he must have derived in so great a degree by starting his water, as I could perceive, upwards of an hour before we came within gun shot, water running out of his scuppers

While in Chase it was difficult to determine whether our own situation or that of the other vessels of the squadron was the most unpleasant: The Superior sailing of the *President* was not such (off the wind) as to enable us to get upon the broadside of the Enemy: the situation of the others was not less irksome as not even the headmost, which was the *Congress*, was able at any time to get within less than two Gun Shots and even at that but for a very little time

In endeavouring to get alongside of the Enemy the following persons were killed and wounded: 16 of whom were killed & wounded by the bursting of our own Gun viz

Killed

John Taylor Junr	Midshipman
John H. Bird	Midshipman
Francis H. Dwight	Marine

Wounded

Commodore Rodgers		
Thomas Gamble	Lieutenant	severely
John Heath	Lieut of Marines	slightly
Mathew C. Perry	Midshipman	slightly
Frank Ellery	Midshipman	slightly
Lawrence Montgomery	Midshipman	lost his left arm
John Barrett	Quarter Gunner	Severly
James Beasley	do	Slightly
David Basset	do	Severly, since dead
Andrew Mathews	do	Slightly
Jordon Beebe	Armourer	do
John Clapp	Seaman	severely
James Stewart	do	Slightly
George Ross	do	do
William Thomas	Ordy Seamn	do
Neil Harding	do	do
John Berry	do	do
Henry Gilbert	do	do
John Smith 5th	Boy	do

The great part of the wounded have since recovered.

Copy, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 2 (enclosure to Commodore Rodgers's letter to Secretary of the Navy Hamilton, 1 Sept. 1812).

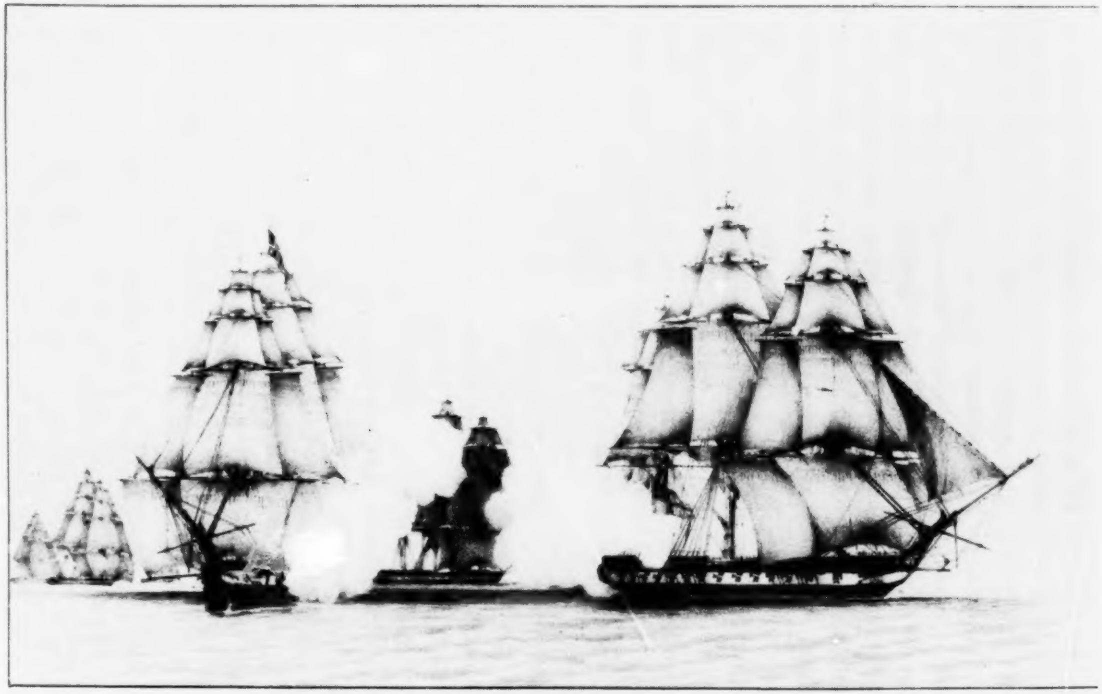
Captain Richard Byron, R.N., to Vice Admiral Herbert Sawyer, R.N.

His Majesty's Ship *Belvidera*
Halifax Harbour 27 June 1812

Sir,

I beg leave to acquaint you that in pursuance of the Orders I had the Honor to receive from you at Bermuda, the *Belvidera* was on the 23rd instant in Latde. 39.26N, Longde 71.10W, in expectation of the French Privateer *Marengo* coming out of New London. At break of Day, the Officer of the Watch informed me the upper Sails of five vessels were seen in the South West. I stood towards them to reconnoitre.

When about six Miles from us, they haul'd to the wind, by Signal, in chace of the *Belvidera*. I tack'd from them and in consequence of their



ESCAPE OF THE BELVIDERE *Commanded by the late* JOHN RD BYRON C.B. *from the* AMERICAN SQUADRON.

not answering the Private Signal, made sail At 11:30 A.M. hoisted our Colours, the strange Squadron showed the American flag. The Breeze falling light, but still favoring the American Squadron, brought their van Ship, which I believe to have been the *President*, within point Blank distance on the Weather Quarter At 4:20 p.m he opened his fire from his foremost Guns. I had given the most positive Orders to my Lieutenants to prick the Cartridges but not to prime the Guns. Although ignorant of the War, we were of course prepared, and about five Minutes afterwards opened ours with two Carronades 32 Pounders and two long Eighteens from the Stern. In light Winds the *President* sail'd better than the *Belvidera*, and as his second, a very heavy Frigate, sail'd as well. I acknowledge I was much surprised at the nearest Ship, yawing repeatedly and giving starboard and larboard Broadsides, when it was fully in his power to have run up alongside the *Belvidera*. I thought it my duty to make a firm retreat from three Frigates of the largest Class accompanied by a small Frigate or Sloop and a brig of War, two of which bore broad Pendants. The Cannonade continued on both sides until seven o'clock. About half an Hour previous to the close, his second began an ineffective fire. At 10:30, by the good advice of the Master, I shifted the course at once six points to starboard. The Enemy haul'd up after us but with less decision, evidently apprehensive of losing some of his Consorts, and at 11:30 being a fine Moon, we saw him wear and heave to on the opposite Tack, also the Second, and the other Frigate, and I conclude the two sternmost did, as they came up.

The necessity of retreat was painful to every one on board the *Belvidera*. The Stern and Quarters are damaged. Main topmast shot through, and Cross Jack Yard away in the Slings. Sails cut with some standing and running Rigging The *President* must have suffer'd considerably from the excellent direction of the two quarter Deck Guns by Lieutenant John Sykes, first of this Ship, an Officer of seventeen years standing; and the fire of the two eighteen Pounders was very quick and well directed by Lieutenant William Henry Bruce and the Honble Lieutenant George Pryse Campbell. To the Lieutenants I am much indebted and equally so to Mr James Ker the Master for his speedy refitment of the Rigging as it was Shot away, and his spirited activity in resetting the Studding Sails as their Halliards were cut. Much praise is due to Lieutenant James Campbell of the Royal Marines for the determined example he shew'd to his Party. I am infinitely satisfied with the valourous and steady conduct of the Warrant and Petty Officers, Seamen and Marines of the *Belvidera*.

Herewith I enclose the small list of kill'd and wounded which in some measure is to be attributed to the endeavor of the Enemy to dismantle us.[1] John Hill, the Armourer and William Gould of the Forecastle were very good Men. I feel obliged to account for not waiting personally upon you, having received a contusion above my knee by one of the Carronades breaking loose in firing which will very soon be well. The Bearer of this, Lieutenant John Sykes is an excellent Officer that will give you every information. I hope my conduct will meet your approbation. I have the Honor to be [&c.]

(signed) R. Byron Captain

Herbert Sawyer Esqr
Vice Admiral of the Blue
and Commander in Chief

Copy, UkLPR, Adm. 1 (In-Letters), Vol. 502, part 1, 299-302.

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[1] For the enclosure, see ibid., p. 303.

CAPTAIN ISAAC HULL TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

U.S. Frigate *Constitution*
Annapolis Bay July 2d 1812

Sir,

I have the honour to inform you that I have this day received from Baltimore, Ten Men, recruited by Mr. [Midn. Charles W.] Morgan, the vessel has also arrived from Norfolk with the Marines and Spars. The Officer that came with the Marines, reports that on Sunday Evening, a heavy cannonading was heard off the Capes, which lasted for three quarters of an hour. Several vessels have passed up the Bay to day; none of which saw any Cruizers. By Sunday next, the Ship will be in tolerable order for Sea but the Crew you will readily conceive, must yet be unacquainted with a Ship of War, as many of them have but lately joined us and never were in an armed Ship before. We are doing all that we can to make them acquainted with the duty, and in a few days, we shall have nothing to fear from any single deck Ship; indeed;

unacquainted as we now are, we should I hope give a good account of any Frigate the enemy have, I have the Honour [&c.]

Isaac Hull

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 85.

CAPTAIN ISAAC HULL TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

U.S. Frigate *Constitution*
At Sea July 21st 1812

Sir,

In pursuance of your orders of the 3d inst I left Annapolis on the 5th inst and the Capes on the 12th of which I advised you by the Pilot that brought the Ship to sea.

For several days after we got out the wind was light, and ahead which with a Strong Southerly current prevented our making much way to the Northward On the 17th at 2 PM being in 22 fathoms water off Egg harbour four sail of Ships were discovered from the Mast Head to the Northward and in shore of us; apparently Ships of War The wind being very light all sail was made in chase of them, to ascertain whether they were Enemy's Ships, or our Squadron having got out of New York waiting the arrival of the *Constitution*, the latter of which, I had reason to believe was the case.

At 4 in the afternoon a Ship was seen from the Mast head bearing about NE Standing for us under all sail,[1] which she continued to do until Sundown at which time, she was too far off to distinguish signals and the Ships in Shore, only to be seen from the Tops, they were standing off to the Southward, and Eastward. As we could not ascertain before dark, what the Ship in the offing was, I determined to stand for her and get near enough to make the night signal. At 10 in the Evening being within Six or Eight miles of the Strange sail, the Private Signal was made, and kept up nearly one hour, but finding she could not answer it, I concluded she, and the Ships in Shore were Enemy. I immediately hauled off to the Southward, and Eastward, and made all sail, having determined to lay off till day light, to see what they were. The Ship that we had been chasing hauled off after us showing a light, and occasionally making signals, supposed to be for the Ships in Shore.

18th. At day light, or a little before it was quite light, Saw two sail under our Lee, which proved to be Frigates of the Enemies. One Frigate astern within about five or Six miles, and a Line of Battle Ship, a Frigate, a Brig, and Schooner, about ten or twelve miles directly astern all in chase of us, with a fine breeze, and coming up very fast it being nearly calm where we were.[2] Soon after Sunrise the wind entirely left us, and the Ship would not steer but fell round off with her head towards the two Ships under our lee.

The Boats were instantly hoisted out, and sent ahead to tow the Ships head round, and to endeavour to get her farther from the Enemy, being then within five miles of three heavy Frigates. The Boats of the Enemy were got out, and sent ahead to tow, which with the light air that remained with them, they came up very fast. Finding the Enemy coming fast up and but little chance of escaping from them; I ordered two of the Guns on the Gun Deck, run out at the Cabbin windows for Stern Guns on the gun deck, and hoisted one of the 24 Pounders off the Gundeck, and run that, with the Fore Castle Gun, an Eighteen pounder, out at the Ports on the Quarter Deck, and cleared the Ship for Action, being determined they should not get her, without resistance on our part, notwithstanding their force, and the situation we were placed in. At about 7 in the Morning the Ship nearest us approaching with Gun Shot, and directly astern, I ordered one of the Stern Guns fired to see if we could reach her, to endeavour to disable her masts, found the Shot fell a little Short, would not fire any more.

At 8 four of the Enemy's Ships nearly within Gun Shot, some of them having six or eight boats ahead towing, with all their oars, and sweeps out to row them up with us, which they were fast doeing. It soon appeared that we must be taken, and that our Escape was impossible, four heavy Ships nearly within Gun Shot, and coming up fast, and not the least hope of a breeze, to give us a chance of getting off by out sailing them. In this Situation finding ourselves in only twenty four fathoms water (by the suggestion of that valuable officer Lieutenant [Charles] Morris) I determined to try and warp the Ship ahead, by carrying out anchors and warp her up to them, Three or four hundred fathoms of rope was instantly got up, and two anchors got ready and sent ahead, by which means we began to gain ahead of the Enemy, They however soon saw our Boats carrying out the anchors, and adopted the same plan, under very advantageous circumstances, as all the Boats, from the Ship furthermost off were sent to Tow, and Warp up those nearest to us, by which means they again came up, So that at

9 the Ship nearest us began firing her bow guns, which we instantly returned by our Stern guns in the cabbin, and on the Quarter Deck; All the Shots from the Enemy fell short, but we have reason to believe that some of ours went on board her, as we could not see them strike the Water.

Soon after 9 a Second Frigate passed under our lee, and opened her Broadside, but finding her shot fall short, discontinued her fire, but continued as did all the rest of them, to make every possible exertion to get up with us. From 9 to 12 all hands were employed in warping the Ship ahead, and in starting some of the water in the main Hold, to lighten her, which with the help of a light air, we rather gained of the Enemy, or at least hold our own. About 2 in the afternoon, all the Boats from the line of Battle Ship, and some of the Frigates, were sent to the Frigate nearest to us, to endeavour to tow her up, but a light breeze sprung up, which enabled us to hold way with her notwithstanding they had Eight or Ten Boats ahead, and all her sails furled to tow her to windward. The wind continued light until 11 at night, and the Boats were kept ahead towing, and warping to keep out of the reach of the Enemy, Three of their Frigates being very near us. At 11 we got a light breeze from the Southward, the boats came along side, and were hoisted up, the Ship having too much way to keep them ahead, The Enemy still in chase, and very near.

19th. At day light passed within gunshot of one of the Frigates but she did not fire on us, perhaps for fear of becalming her as the wind was light Soon after passing us, she tacked, and stood after us, at this time Six Sail were in Sight under all sail after us.

At 9 in the morning saw a Strange sail on our Weather Beam, supposed to be an American merchant ship, the instant the Frigate, nearest us saw her she hoisted American colours, as did all the Squadron in hopes to decoy her down, I immediately hoisted English colours, that she might not be deceived, she soon hauled her wind, and it is to be hoped made her escape. All this day the Wind increased gradually and we gained on the Enemy, in the course of the day Six or Eight miles, they however continued chasing us all night under a press of Sail.

20th. At day light in the Morning only three of them could be seen from the Mast head, the nearest of which, was about 12 miles off directly astern. All hands were set at work wetting the Sails, from the Royals down, with the Engine, and Fire buckets, and we soon found that we left the Enemy very fast. At 1/4 past 8 the Enemy finding that

Chase of U.S.S. Constitution *off the Jersey Coast, 17–19 July 1812* they were fast dropping astern, gave over chase, and hauled their wind to the Northward, probably for the Station off New York. At 1/2 past 8 Saw a sail ahead gave chase after her under all sail. At 9 Saw another Strange sail under our Lee Bow, we soon spoke the first sail, discovered and found her to be an American Brig from St Domingue bound Portland, I directed the Captain how to steer to avoid the Enemy, and made sail for the vessel to leeward, on coming up with her, She proved to be an American Brig from St Bartholemews, bound to Philadelphia, but on being informed of War he bore up for Charleston, S.C.

Finding the Ship so far to the Southward, and Eastward, and the Enemy's Squadron stationed off New York, which would make it impossible for the Ship to get in there. I determined to make for Boston to receive your further orders, and I hope that my having done so will meet your approbation. My wish to explain to you as clearly as possible why your orders, have not been executed, and the length of time the Enemy were in chase of us with various other circumstances, has caused me to make this communication much longer than I would have wished, yet I cannot (in justice to the brave Officers, and crew under my Command) close it without expressing to you the confidence I have in them, and assuring you that their conduct whilst under the Guns of the Enemy was such as might have been expected from American Officers and Seamen. I have the Honour to be [&c.]

Isaac Hull

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 127.

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1. H.M. Frigate *Guerriere*, 36 guns, Captain James Dacres.

2. These ships comprised Commodore Philip V. Broke's squadron out of Halifax, including *Africa*, 64, *Shannon*, 38, *Belvidera*, 36, and *Aeolus*, 32. When *Guerriere* joined, the squadron was made up of one ship of the line and four frigates. Hull's account also mentions a "brig and a schooner" sailing in company with the squadron. The schooner was probably a prize sailing in company or a tender of H.M.S. *Africa*. The brig was the former U.S. brig *Nautilus* which Broke's own *Shannon* had captured on 16 July. See *The Naval Chronicle containing a general and biographical history of the Royal Navy of the United Kingdom* . . . , 40 vols. (London, 1813), XXVIII: 53, and James Fenimore Cooper, *The History of the Navy of the United States of America*, 2 vols. (Philadelphia, 1839), II: 153.

Privateering in the War of 1812

American privateering developed naturally from an ancient seafaring tradition pursued in England and other countries.[1] *During the War of 1812, as in the wars during the colonial period and Revolution, entrepreneurs, sea captains, and seamen joined company in the building, fitting out, manning, and fighting of private armed ships. These civilian warships were of all rigs and sizes, and in effect, they augmented the naval forces of the United States. The distinction usually drawn between letter of marque traders and privateers was often blurred in practice. A government-issued letter of marque and reprisal gave license to a ship's captain to engage in warlike acts in self defense. Some ships with such a license would carry a cargo for trade while mounting cannon for defensive purposes, but others sailed with holds filled with munitions for the sole purpose of capturing or destroying enemy merchantmen. Letter of marque traders, however, might also seek out targets of opportunity as their navigation permitted.*

The typical privateer ship of the War of 1812 was a fast-sailing schooner or brig out of Salem or Baltimore, heavily armed and carrying a large crew. Ship owners drafted their captains' orders and expected that they would operate independently of other ships. Privateers did not usually choose to fight a British warship, and it was considered no disgrace to run from such an encounter when the odds were dubious. Privateering was a very speculative business venture and the taking of a heavily-laden merchantman was much more desirable than running the risk of damage or capture that could result from an attack on a man-of-war.

Owners, captain, and crew shared unequally in the proceeds of a successful capture. When possible, prize crews were placed on board captured vessels, and they were directed to sail to the nearest safe port where the prizes could be libelled and condemned in an Admiralty Court proceeding. After judgment, the ship and goods were put up for sale, and the proceeds went to the owners who received a 50 percent share. The remainder was then distributed to captain, officers, and crew in accordance with articles of agreement signed before the voyage.

As normal trade was either difficult or impossible during a naval war, merchants in most seaports looked to privateering as the only alternative for making profits with the ships and men at their disposal. On the other hand, seamen frequently preferred to sign on for a *privateering cruise than to enlist in the navy for longer terms, lower pay, and stricter discipline. Under the circumstances, it is understandable that there was an enthusiastic response to Congress' prompt action in passing a law to encourage and to govern privateering in June 1812. The document that follows is an extract from the law that details the procedures for privateering. Within days of the publication of the act, privateers put to sea, anticipating an active and profitable summer.*

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[1] *Some classic works on early American privateering are J. Franklin Jameson, ed.,* Privateering and Piracy in the Colonial Period *(New York, 1923; reprint ed., 1970) and Howard M. Chapin's* Privateer Ships and Sailors, the First Century of American Colonial Privateering, 1625-1725 *(Toulon, France, 1926),* Rhode Island Privateers in King George's War, 1739-1748 *(Providence, 1926), and* Privateering in King George's War, 1739-1748 *(Providence, 1928). A popular account of privateering from colonial times through the War of 1812 is Edgar Stanton Maclay's* A History of American Privateers *(New York, 1899). William James Morgan's "American Privateering in America's War for Independence, 1775-1783" in* The American Neptune *XXXVI, No. 2 (Apr. 1976) provides a recent assessment of the state of research on the subject and questions Maclay's sweeping assertions. There are few specific works dealing with privateering during the War of 1812, but the contemporary George Coggeshall, a privateersman himself, provided the colorful* History of the American Privateers, and Letters-of-Marque, during Our War with England in the years 1812, '13 and '14 *(New York, 1861) and Jerome R. Garitee's* The Republic's Private Navy: The American Privateering Business as Practiced by Baltimore during the War of 1812 *(Middletown, Conn., 1977) is an excellent history of urban business and seafaring during the war.*

"AN ACT CONCERNING LETTERS OF MARQUE, PRIZES, AND PRIZE GOODS."

[Extract]

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the President of the United States shall be, and he is hereby authorized and empowered to revoke and annul at pleasure all letters of marque and reprisal which he shall or may at any time grant pursuant to an act entituled "An act declaring war between the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and the dependencies thereof, and the United States of America and their territories."

SEC. 2. *And be it further enacted,* That all persons applying for letters of marque and reprisal, pursuant to the act aforesaid, shall state in writing the name and a suitable description of the tonnage and force of the vessel, and the name and place of residence of each owner concerned therein, and the intended number of the crew;

which statement shall be signed by the person or persons making such application, and filed with the Secretary of State, or shall be delivered to any other officer or person who shall be employed to deliver out such commissions, to be by him transmitted to the Secretary of State.

Sec. 3. *And be it further enacted,* That before any commission of letters of marque and reprisal shall be issued as aforesaid, the owner or owners of the ship or vessel for which the same shall be requested, and the commander thereof, for the time being, shall give bond to the United States, with at least two responsible sureties, not interested in such vessel, in the penal sum of five thousand dollars; or if such vessel be provided with more than one hundred and fifty men, then in the penal sum of ten thousand dollars; with condition that the owners, officers, and crew, who shall be employed on board such commissioned vessel, shall and will observe the treaties and laws of the United States, and the instructions which shall be given them according to law for the regulation of their conduct; and will satisfy all damages and injuries which shall be done or committed contrary to the tenor thereof by such vessel, during her commission, and to deliver up the same when revoked by the President of the United States.

Sec. 4. *And be it further enacted,* That all captures and prizes of vessels and property, shall be forfeited and shall accrue to the owners, officers and crews of the vessels by whom such captures and prizes shall be made; and on due condemnation had, shall be distributed according to any written agreement which shall be made between them; and if there be no such agreement, then one moiety to the owners, and the other moiety to the officers and crew, to be distributed between the officers and crew as nearly as may be, according to the rules prescribed for the distribution of prize money, by the act entituled "An act for the better government of the navy of the United States," passed the twenty-third day of April, one thousand eight hundred. . . .

Sec. 12. *And be it further enacted,* That the commanders of vessels having letters of marque and reprisal as aforesaid, neglecting to keep a journal . . . or wilfully making fraudulent entries therein, or obliterating any material transactions therein, where the interest of the United States is in any manner concerned, or refusing to produce such journal, commission or certificate, pursuant to the preceding section of this act, then and in such cases, the commissions or letters of marque and reprisal of such vessels, shall be liable to be revoked; and such commanders, respectively shall forfeit for every such offence the sum of one thousand dollars, one moiety thereof to the use of the United States, and the other to the informer. . . .

Sec. 13. *And it be further enacted,* That the owners or commanders of vessels having letters of marque and reprisal as aforesaid, who shall violate any of the acts of Congress for the collection of the revenue of the United States and for the prevention of smuggling, shall forfeit the commission or letters of marque and reprisal, and they and the vessels owned or commanded by them, shall be liable to all the penalties and forfeitures attaching to merchant vessels in like cases. . . .

Sec. 15. *And be it further enacted,* That all offences committed by any officer or seaman on board any such vessel, having letters of marque and reprisal, during the present hostilities against Great Britain, shall be tried and punished in such manner as the like offences are or may be tried and punished when committed by any person belonging to the public ships of war of the United States: *Provided always,* that all offenders who shall be accused of such crimes as are cognizable by a court martial, shall be confined on board the vessel in which such offence is alleged to have been committed, until her arrival at some port in the United States or their territories; or until she shall meet with one or more of the public armed vessels of the United States abroad, the officers whereof shall be sufficient to make a court martial for the trial of the accused; and upon application made, by the commander of such vessel, on board of which the offence is alleged to have been committed, to the Secretary of the Navy, or to the commander or senior officer of the ship or ships of war of the United States abroad as aforesaid, the Secretary of the Navy, or such commander or officer, is hereby authorized to order a court martial of the officers of the navy of the United States, for the trial of the accused, who shall be tried by the said court. . . .

Sec. 17. *And be it further enacted,* That two per centum on the net amount (after deducting all charges and expenditures) of the prize money arising from captured vessels and cargoes, and on the net amount of the salvage of vessels and cargoes recaptured by the private armed vessels of the United States, shall be secured and paid over to the collector or other chief officer of the customs at the port or place in the United States, at which such captured or recaptured vessels may arrive; or to the consul or other public agent of the

United States residing at the port or place, not within the United States, at which such captured or recaptured vessels may arrive. And the monies arising therefrom, shall be held and hereby is pledged by the government of the United States as a fund for the support and maintenance of the widows and orphans of such persons as may be slain; and for the support and maintenance of such persons as may be wounded and disabled on board of the private armed vessels of the United States, in any engagement with the enemy, to be assigned and distributed in such manner as shall hereafter by law be provided.

APPROVED, June 26, 1812.

Peters, *Public Statutes at Large*, II: 759-60, 762-64.

A Tar and Feathering Incident

During the period while Essex *lay at New York Navy Yard undergoing urgent repairs, Master Commandant David Porter mustered his crew at quarters and administered an oath of allegiance. When Sailmaker John Erving [or Irving], an Englishman, objected, his messmates went to Porter and asked permission to apply the ancient punishment of tar and feathers to humiliate the man for his lack of patriotism. Porter was caught up in the enthusiasm of the moment and granted their request.*[1] *He may have regretted this later on. After receiving his coating of tar and feathers, Erving was sent on shore where he knew no one. The police took him into custody to protect him from irate civilians. The case attracted considerable attention and some sympathy for Erving. An account was published in the press, and ultimately the event came to the attention of British naval authorities at Halifax. The secretary of the navy was not amused and sent Porter a sharp rebuke. The documents that follow include Porter's report, the secretary's reply, communications between the police magistrate and Porter, and a document called a "protection" purporting to identify Erving as an American citizen.*

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1. As an example of what another commander did when faced with British seamen who did not wish to fight against their countrymen see Isaac Hull to Secretary Hamilton, 20 June 1812, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 43 and Hamilton's reply, 1 July 1812, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 10, p. 82. The British seamen in Constitution *did not want to serve at sea for fear of being* *hung if captured by the British. They asked for service in a fort or guardship but were discharged instead.*

MASTER COMMANDANT DAVID PORTER TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

U.S. Frigate *Essex*
Navy Yard Brooklyn
28th June 1812

Sir,

A circumstance that occurred on board the *Essex*, the day before yesterday excited some interest in this place and may produce some enquirey from the Department.

John Erving an American seaman belonging to the *Essex*, declared himself to be an Englishman when called upon to take the oath of allegiance. The crew requested me to permit them to tar & feather him, and turn him out of the ship with appropriate labels on him, I consented; The Poliece to prevent a riot took him in charge; The British consul I am informed has declared him to be an Englishman, and is about engaging a passage for him to Halifax. The Police Office I am told has consented to this measure. Erving has already had an interview with the Consul.

Yesterday the enclosed correspondence took place between me and a magistrate of the Police Office, & it was from the bearer of the letter that I received information of the above arrangement; I desired him to inform the officers of the police that I should protest in the most solem manner against the delivery of Erving to our enemy, who may through him obtain much information respecting our Navy. Perhaps Sir, there may be such a character on board each of our vessels. I have the honor &c

D Porter

LS, DNA, RG45, MC, 1812, Vol. 1, No. 72.

[Enclosure]

City of New York ss June 26th 1812

John Erving being duly sworn deposeth & saith, that he was born in New Castle on Tyne (England) that he has resided within the United States of America since the year 1800, is a Sail Maker, has never been naturalized in the United States. That on the 14th day of last Octr 1811, he entered at Salem in the capacity of Sail Makers Mate, for the frigate *Essex*, that he joined said Frigate at Norfolk on board of which he continued until this day that about 9 O'clock this morning all hands were pipe'd to muster when Capt Porter (Capt of said Frigate) told the hands that they were called up to take the oath of allegiance to the United States, and gave them to understand that any man who did not chuse to take the oath should be discharged, that when deponents name was called, he told Capt Porter that he, the deponent, could not take the oath required, being a British subject, on which Capt Porter called the Petty Officers and said to them, that they must pass sentence on him the deponent, on which the said Petty Officers put him in the Launch which was along side the Frigate and there put a bucket of tar on him, and after which laid on him a quantity of feathers. They then rowe'd said Launch stern formost on shore on New York Island and put him on shore, but whereabouts deponent does not know as he was never here before. That deponent went from Street to Street naked from the waist up, smeare'd with Tar & feathers not knowing where to go, when a man (Benjamin Ford) told him to go into his shop from the mob, or crow'd of people then around him, that he staid in said Shop until the Police Magistrate took him from thence and put him in the City Prison for protection, where he has been cleansed and got a Shirt & Trowsers. The deponent further swears that none of the citizens, or inhabitants of the City of New York done him any manner of injury, or insulted him, but that he has been assisted and protected by the civil authority thereof

(Signed) John Erving

Taken & Sworn before me in the
Police Office of the City of New York
June 26th 1812

(Signed) Charles Christian
Special Justice of the peace for said City

Copy, DNA, RG45, MC, 1812, Vol. 1, No. 72.

[Enclosure] Police Office City of New York
(Copy) June 26th 1812
Sir,

The bearer John Erving was this morning put on shore in this City Tarred & Feathered-the Mayor of this City-the Justices at this Office, and the citizens without exception have protected him. Finding on examination that the said Erving is a British Subject and a total stranger in this City, I therefore refer him to you for further succour. Your Obt Servt

(Signed) Charles Christian
Special Justice of the Peace

Thomas Barclay Esqr

Copy, DNA, RG45, MC, 1812, Vol. 1, No. 72.

[Enclosure] Police Office, City of New York
June 27th 1812
Sir,

I had the honor this moment to receive your note of the present date, and in consequence of the information it contains, I have committed John Erving, with a veiew to his safe keeping, and further examination of this subject, as a disorderly person. Presuming that a perusal of his examination at this office may be useful to you individually, or to the service, I have communicated it by Mr Montgomery (Police Officer) with instructions to return it to this office; should you judge proper a copy of it is entirely at your service. Respectfully [&c.]

(Signed) Charles Christian

David Porter Esqr
Capt. U S Frigate *Essex*–
Brooklyn

Copy, DNA, RG45, MC, 1812, Vol. 1, No. 72.

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[Enclosure]

Commanding officer on board
the *Essex* Frigate

Police Office
New York
June 27th 1812

Sir,

John Erving who was landed in this City yesterday from the *Essex*, says that his clothing is on board that Frigate. He is in the care of the Police of this City who have given him a Shirt & Trowsers. If you judge proper to give his chest and clothes to the bearer, Mr. Raynor, Police Officer, he will receive them. Erving says that the Armourer of the *Essex* can inform you where his clothes is placed. Your Obt Servt

(Signed) Charles Christian
Special Justice

Copy, DNA, RG45, MC, 1812, Vol. 1, No. 72.

[Enclosure]

U.S. Frigate *Essex*
27th June 1812

Sir,

John Erving is an American Citizen, I herewith enclose a copy of his protection. His clothes cannot be delivered until I am furnished by the Purser with a statement of his accounts, should he not be indebted to the United States they shall be delivered to your order. Very Respectfully [&c.]

(Signed) D. Porter

Charles Christian Esqr
New York

Copy, DNA, RG45, MC, 1812, Vol. 1, No. 72.

[Enclosure]

(Protection)[1]

No: 189

United States of America

Virginia, ss

I, Larkin Smith Collector of the District of Norfolk & Portsmouth, do hereby certify that John Erving an American Seaman, aged twenty-three years, or thereabouts, of the height of five feet four 1/4 inches, of a light complexion, brown hair, Grey eyes, Born in Salem in the State of Massachusetts, has this day produced to me proof in the manner directed in the act entitled "an act for the relief and protection of American Seamen" and pursuant to said act, I do hereby certify, that the said John Erving is a citizen of the United States of America.

In witness whereof,
Seal I have hereunto set my hand & seal of office
this 23d day of April
One thousand eight hundred and eleven

Signed Larkin Smith
Collector

I certify that the above is a true copy of the original
W W Bostwick

Copy, DNA, RG45, MC, 1812, Vol. 1, No. 72.

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[1] Documents such as this were commonly carried by American seamen in the years when British warships were stopping and searching American merchantmen. If a seaman could produce a document certifying American citizenship, there was less chance of being pressed. Yet, British officers frequently refused to honor "protections" because they were easily forged or falsely sworn. If Erving was indeed English, the above document is an example of a false protection.

Secretary of the Navy Hamilton to Master Commandant David Porter

Capt. David Porter
New York

Navy Depmt
30 June 1812

I have just received your letter of the 28 Inst.

It is much to be regretted that you gave sanction to the proceedings on the part of your crew in the case of John Irving. It is indeed to be regretted that you did not suppress the proceedings. Mobs will in Spite of all Law, sometimes Act licentiously, but Mobs should never be suffered to exist on board of a Man of War, while ordere discipline & a perfect observance of the Law should be inforced. Tyrany in whatever Shape it may appear, ought to be resisted by all men. I do exceedingly regret, that an officer of your rank & intelligence should have permitted the proceedings in question.

P. Hamilton

Copy, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 10, pp. 81-82.

Navy Appropriations

To pay for an expanded navy, including the repairs for three of the smaller frigates, Constellation, Chesapeake, *and* Adams, *the equipping and manning of additional gunboats, the repair of damage which was likely to occur to American warships, and the refitting of prizes captured worthy of being taken into the navy, required much larger sums of money than had been spent on the navy for many years. To obtain some departmental support for this legislation, Langdon Cheves, chairman of the Naval Committee of Congress, requested Secretary Hamilton's written opinion on several topics. The following letter is Hamilton's reply to the Naval Committee.*

Secretary of the Navy Hamilton to Langdon Cheves, Chairman of the Naval Committee

Navy Depart.
30 June 1812

I have this moment received your communication of this day's date, and in reply have the honor to state

that in the Estimates & appropriations for the naval Service for the year 1812, the employment of three frigates, authorized to be repaired & equipped, has not been provided for: also that there are ninety gun boats, for the employment of which no provisions have been made-that these three frigates namely-The *Constellation*, the *Chesapeak* & the *Adams*-will probably be prepared for Service in time to admit of their being employed three months during the present year & that the President has judged it expedient to put into Service the ninety additional gun boats above mentioned.

The Sixty two gun boats at this time in Service, are employed at New Orleans, St marys Savannah, Charleston, Wilmington N.C. Ocracock Norfolk & New York. The additional ninety will be employed & distributed in our several ports most requiring them, as the President shall direct. Among other places, Norfolk and New York will require an additional number-Baltimore, Annapolis, The Potomac, Philadelphia, Newport, R.I., Stonington [Connecticut], Boston, Portsmouth, Portland, Saco [Maine], Kennebunk [Maine] &c also require gunboats.

To state the respective periods of service of each of the gun boats now in service, would involve considerable enquiry, necessarily producing considerable delay and as you have requested an early answer to your communication, I have not judged an answer to that branch of your inquiries to be indispensable.

With respect to the appropriation required to enable the Executive to employ the three frigates & the 90 gun boats the following general Estimate is submitted.

The annual cost of the *Constellation* in service is estimated at	$10,5000
that of the *Chesapeake* the same	10,5000
that of the *Adams*	75,000
annual expense of the three	$285,000
One fourth of which, that is three months service of the whole will be	$71,250
The annual cost of a gun boat in actual service in time of war is estimated at	12,500
The annual expense of ninety gun boats would therefore be	1,125,000
One half of which that is six months service of the 90 gun boats would be	562,500

The repairing our vessels of war, that may be damaged in action no provision has yet been made-neither has any provision been made for purchasing or bringing into service any of the vessels of war of the enemy that may be captured by our Cruizers. For the first of these two objects namely the repairing of our vessels that may be damaged in action with the enemy, I would recommend that there be appropriated the sum of $400,000.

What sum will probably be required, to enable the Government to purchase & employ the vessels of war of the enemy, that they may be captured by our cruizers; it is obviously impossible to say-it will depend in a great degree upon the Enterprize of our Commanders, upon which in my opinion, great reliance may be justly placed-that the limited means committed to them will be judiciously, faithfully & zealously employed, I am fully persuaded. I will only further remark, that the greater the number of occasions for expenditure under this head, the greater will be the number of our national trophies: that the governments of Europe almost invariably, make it a point to purchase and put into Commission their enemy vessels of war captured by their cruizers, and that the money, by being specifically appropriated to that object, if not required for such objects would remain unexpended. If to the sum above stated to be required for other objects, we were to add the sum of $466,250 for this, the whole together would constitute a total of $1,500,000, that is to say

for 3 months service of the *Constellation*, *Chesapeak* & *Adams*	71,250
for 6 months service of 90 Gun boats	562,500
for repairing our vessels of war, that may be damaged in action	400,000
for purchasing & putting into Commission the war vessels of the enemy, that may be captured by our cruizers.	466,250
making a total	$1,550,000

Should Congress deem it expedient to provide for these objects the appropriations, in order to make them correspond with the specific heads of appropriation usually observed should be made as follows vis.

For pay & subsistence of the officers & pay of the Seamen	322,500
For provisions	184,500
For medicine, instruments & hospital stores	14,000
For Repairs	482,750
For Contingent expenses	30,000
For purchasing & equipping & putting into commission the war vessels of the Enemy, that may be captured by our cruizers	466,250
Dollars.	1,500,000

I have the honor
Paul Hamilton

Copy, DNA, RG45, Secretary of the Navy Letters to Congress, Vol. 1, pp. 112-14.

British Naval Strength in North America

When evaluating the strength of the British Navy assigned to the western Atlantic, historians frequently count only the ships based on what the British called the "North American Station." This station was based on Halifax under an admiral or vice admiral. Not usually considered is the number of ships assigned to other stations either in the North Atlantic or in the Caribbean. Privateers and U.S. Navy ships risked meeting many of these ships as well as those strictly based at Halifax. The Admiralty kept track of the ships assigned to or ordered from its naval stations by means of a "Ships in Sea Pay" list that had been issued quarterly during the American Revolution. By the time of the War of 1812, however, Ships in Sea Pay was issued only twice a year, in January and July. In the following Ships in Sea Pay list, one finds listed the ships assigned to the Leeward Islands (based on Antigua), Jamaica (based on Port Royal), and Newfoundland (based on St. John's), as well as those on the North American station. Ships such as Southampton, Frolic, *and* Brazen *belonged to the Jamaica station when they met American naval forces in the first year of the war. H.M. sloop* Alert *was operating out of St. John's, Newfoundland, when she was captured by* Essex *in August 1812. Thus, although American ships were most likely to encounter British warships from Halifax, they might also meet warships from other western Atlantic or Caribbean stations.*

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SHIPS IN SEA PAY

[Extract]

Admiralty Office
1 July 1812

The present disposition of His Majesty's Ships and Vessels in Sea Pay

Rate	Ships	No of Guns	No of Men	Commanders	When Commissd	When sailed from England
Leeward Islands.						
Rear Admiral Sir Francis Laforey Bart:						
3	*Dragon*	74	640	R.A. Sir F. Laforey F.A. Collier	1 Sept 1810	31 Oct 1810
5	*Statira*	38	300	H. Stackpoole	30 July 1807	3 Oct 1808
"	*Orpheus*	36	274	H. Pigot	22 Aug 1809	24 Nov 1809
"	*Tribune*	36	274	Geo: Reynolds	15 July 1803	5 Mar 1811
6	*Cherub*	20	121	T.T. Tucker	7 Apl 1807	29 Feb 1808
"	*Lightning*	20	121	B.C. Doyle	25 Mar 1807	2 Feb 1812
Sloop	*Amaranthe*	18	121	G. Pringle	17 Jany 1805	20 Apl 1805
"	*Forester*	18	121	A. Kennedy	12 Apl 1806	29 Augt 1808
"	*Surinam*	18	121	J. E. Watt	19 Mar 1805	15 Dec 1808
"	*Scorpion*	18	121	R. Giles	14 Nov 1803	3 Apl 1809
"	*Ringdove*	18	121	W. Dowers	17 Sep 1806	4 Dec 1808
"	*Charybdis*	18	121	J. Clephane	18 Feb 1809	23 June 1809
"	*Peruvian*	18	121	A. F. Westropp		
"	*Arachne*	18	121	S. Chambers	16 May 1808	9 May 1809
"	*Julia*	16	95	Hon V. Gardner	7 Feb 1806	30 June 1807
Sloop	*Demerary*	14	86	W. H. Smith	Commissd abroad	
"	*Spider*	14	85	F. G. Willock		
"	*Dominica*	14	62	R. Hockings	29 May 1811	23 Nov 1811
"	*Opossum*	14	76	Thos Wolrige	24 Nov 1808	13 Oct 1809
Gun Brig	*Morne-fortunée*	14	65	Lt. J Steele	Commissd abroad	
"	*Netley*	14	65	" J. Jackson	Do	Do
"	*Elizabeth*	10	55	" E. F. Dwyer	Do	Do
"	*Ballahou*	4	20	" N. King	Do	Do
Schooner	*Swaggerer*	10	50	" G. J. Evelyn	Do	Do
Schr	*Subtle*	10	50	Lt C. Browne	Commissd Abroad	
"	*Laura*	10	50	" C. N. Hunter	Do	Do
"	*Maria*	10	50	" G. Kippen	Do	Do

Rate	Ships	No of Guns	 Men	Commanders	When Commissd	When sailed from England
				Jamaica Vice Admiral Stirling		
3	*Polyphemus*	64	491	V. Adml Stirling C. Quinton	9 July 1804	2 July 1808
5	*Arethusa*	38	284	F. H. Coffin	8 Apl 1805	21 Nov 1811
"	*Thetis*	38	284	W. H. Byam	20 July 1805	31 Mar 1809
"	*Thalia*	36	264	J. G. Vashon	1 Nov 1805	17 May 1810
"	*Southampton*	32	215	Sir J. L. Yeo	3 Nov 1810	13 Mar 1811
6	*Barbadoes*	24	195	T. Huskisson	3 May 1810	23 Nov 1811
6	*Garland*	22	175	R. P. Davies	23 Nov 1807	11 Nov 1807
"	*Cyane*	22	175	T. Forrest	25 Mar 1807	
"	*Herald*	20	121	G. Jackson	12 Mar 1807	under orders to proceed.
Sloop	*Moselle*	18	121	G. Mowbray	21 Nov 1807	16 Jany 1808
"	*Frolic*	18	121	T. Whinyates	1 Apl 1807	25 Feb 1808
"	*Sappho*	18	121	H. O'Grady	4 Feb 1807	22 June 1808
"	*Brazen*	18	121	J. Stirling	26 Mar 1803	3 Mar 1809
"	*Reindeer*	18	121	C. C. Askew	30 Aug 1804	4 Nov 1809
"	*Sapphire*	18	121	Hy Haynes	4 Feb 1807	21 Sep 1810
Sloop	*Rhodian*	14	76	J. G. Boss	28 Jany 1809	25 Apl 1809
Gun Brig	*Decouverte*	10	50	Lieut. Williams	Commissd abroad	
"	*Variable*	10	50	" Yates	Do	Do
Rec:Ship	*Shark*		70	J. Gore	23 June 1806.	
				North America Vice Admiral Sawyer		
3	*Africa*	64	491	V. Adml Sawyer J. Bastard	4 Feb 1809	28 Jany 1811
5	*Guerriere*	38	300	J. R. Dacres	30 Nov 1807	10 Feb 1808
"	*Spartan*	38	300	E. P. Brenton	15 Aug 1805	25 July 1811
"	*Shannon*	38	300	B. P. V. Broke	14 Jany 1806	9 Aug 1811
"	*Belvidera*	36	274	R. Byron	14 Jany 1810	27 Oct 1810
5	*Aeolus*	32	254	Lord J. Townshend	3 Sep 1802	16 Aug 1807
6	*Tartarus*	20	121	J. Pasco	13 Dec 1806	30 Apl 1812
Sloop	*Emulous*	18	121	W. H. Mulcaster	15 Aug 1806	6 Augt 1807
"	*Rattler*	18	121	A. Gordon	13 Dec 1803	— 1811

Rate	Ships	No of Guns	Men	Commanders	When Commissd	When sailed from England
"	*Atalante*	18	121	Fred: Hickey	Commissd abroad	
"	*Indian*	18	121	H. Jane	Do	Do
"	*Goree*	18	121	H. D. Byng	Do	Do
"	*Morgiana*	18	121	D. Scott	Do	Do
"	*Sylph*	18	121	W. Evans	Do	Do
Sloop	*Recruit*	18	121	H. F. Senhouse	19 Mar 1809	19 Nov 1811
"	*Martin*	18	121	J. Evans	21 Mar 1807	under orders to proceed.
"	*Colibre*	16	100	J. Thompson	Commissd abroad	
Schr	*Paz*	10	50	Lt Dumaresq	15 Oct 1808	22 Apl 1811
Gun Brig	*Plumper*	10	50	" Bray	Commissd abroad	
"	*Juniper*	8	42	" Vassall	Do	Do
Schr	*Chub*	4	20	" Nisbett	Do	Do
"	*Cuttle*	4	20	" Saunders	Do	Do
"	*Bream*	4	20	" Simpson	Do	Do
Recg Ship	*Centurion*		36	Lt Kinsman	20 Nov 1808	1809
"	*Ruby*		90	Comre Evans Lt Trounce	7 Oct 1810	25 July 1811
				Newfoundland Admiral Sir J.T. Duckworth Bart: & K.B.		
4	*Antelope*	50	345	Adml Sir J. T. Duckworth Jas Carpenter	12 Mar 1803	22 June 1812
5	*Pomone*	38	300	F. W. Fane	22 Feb 1812	23 May 1812
"	*Hyperion*	36	274	W. P. Cumby	21 Jany 1808	13 May 1812
"	*Jason*	32	215	Hon: W. King	22 Nov 1804	13 Mar 1812
6	*Comet*	20	121	G. W. Blamey	9 Jany 1808	23 May 1812
Sloop	*Hazard*	18	121	Jno Cookesley	27 June 1802	23 Mar 1811
"	*Avenger*	18	121	U. Johnson	14 June 1804	19 May 1812
"	*Electra*	14	95	W. Gregory	7 Feb 1812	27 Apl 1812
"	*Alert*	16	90	T.L.P. Laugharne	14 June 1804	5 Apl 1812
"	*Muros*	10	86	Jas Aberdour	Dec 1811	24 June 1812
Cutter	*Adonis*	10	42	Lt Buchan	8 Mar 1806	1809
Schr	*Holly*	10	50	" Treacher	Commissd abroad	

D, UkLPR, Adm. 8, Ships in Sea Pay, 1812-1813. This chart has been condensed, eliminating two columns which were virtually blank. Lieut. Trounce appeared in a column "Lieutenants" which is placed between "Commanders" and "When Commissd." The phrase "under orders to proceed" originally appeared in a final column labeled "Disposition."

Timbers for *Constellation*

In his letter of 22 June to Secretary Hamilton, Commodore Tingey expressed the need for timber to be used as spars in the refitting of the frigate Congress. *At the same time,* Constellation *also needed timber. In the following letter, Tingey sets out his requirements.*

Commodore Thomas Tingey to Secretary of the Navy Hamilton

Navy Yard Washtn 1st July 1812

Sir

The extreme delay of a vessel, with Pine timber Mast Pieces &c (part of a late Contract with Mr [George] Beale) renders it highly probable that some accident has happened to her, which may prevent a timely supply of materials necessary to finish the lower masts, and make a *Bowsprit for the frigate *Constellation*. I therefore beg leave to suggest the propriety of an immediate order to the Navy Agent at Norfolk, to send as speedily as practicable the following pieces of heart yellow pine

	feet	inches		feet	in
Six Cheeks	70 long	24 by 11	Two top masts	61 long	19 diamtr
Six Side trees	74 "	24 by 10	Five do	56 "	18 do
Six halfyards	56 "	19 by 19	Five Bowsprit pcs	62 "	18 by 18

To be clear of large knots, sap & defects I have the honor [&c.]

Tho^{s} Tingey

*Her Bowsprit has been supplied to the frigate *Constitution*.

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 82.

The War of 1812 Reaches East Florida

U.S. gunboats under the command of Captain Hugh Campbell, stationed on the St. Marys River, were deeply involved in holding a position taken by U.S. troops and Georgia militia at Amelia Island in

March. Already on a war footing, Captain Campbell found himself faced with another enemy after receiving news of the declaration of war with Great Britain, Spain's ally. The following letter records Captain Campbell's report to the secretary on the readiness of the vessels under his command.

CAPTAIN HUGH G. CAMPBELL TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

St Marys July 4th 1812

Sir

I am honored with your orders of the 20th Ult enquiring of me how many Gun Boats are on this station, how many in commission and their condition. For particulars respecting the number of Boats under my command and their stations I beg leave to refer you to my letter of the 27th ult by last mail.

As respects their condition I have to report *Nos 10, 62, 63, 158, 160, 161, 164, 165* & *168*, in good order and fit for service with the exception of their crews which are not compleat. *No 4* although defective will answer for some time on river service. *Nos 160, 165*, and *168* are on the St Johns, *No 10* designed for that place agreable to my last advice, yet remains wind bound.

The Inhabitants of this place are calling on me for protection to the town. The force above mentioned is all I have for the General duty required in these waters. I have the Honor [&c.]

Hugh G. Campbell

P S

By letter from Charleston This day, the *Vixen* Lay at that Place on the 29th Ult her Commdr Sick

H.G.C.

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 89.

Medical Care for Gunboat Crews

Surgeon Edward Cutbush, senior surgeon of the navy, was in charge of the health needs of seamen assigned to gunboats in the Delaware

River. As these men served at a considerable distance from Philadelphia, where there was an improvised naval hospital, he was concerned that the Navy Department make some definite arrangement to provide for hospitalization of men closer to the probable scene of action. He expresses his concerns in the following letter.

SURGEON EDWARD CUTBUSH TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

United States Navy Yard
Philada July 6 1812

Sir,

In consequence of a conversation between Comme [Alexander] Murray and myself, I beg leave, by his request, to address you, on the subject of the medical department of the Gun Boats, and the arrangements connected therewith on which your instructions appear to be requisite. The Commodore expects two mates to be ordered to the twenty gun boats. There will be about 400 men, exclusive of officers, attached to them, the presumption is, that they will be divided into two divisions, each division having a surgeon's mate, or a surgeon and mate to the two divisions, with the necessary articles to render immediate assistance to the sick or wounded of the squadron - but persons who are wounded or very ill cannot be accomodated on board of the boats, neither can any operation of consequence be performed on board. A question then arises, what is to be done with the sick or wounded? Are they to be sent to the Navy Yard at Philada, which may require several days, before an operation can be performed, or are they to be landed at some convenient post on the River Delaware? in either case some provision will be necessary, which cannot be made without your order.

Two small medicine chests have been ordered for the two divisions, I conceive that they ought to be furnished with such articles as may be necessary, having regard to economy, to the number of men and the good of the service, should an engagement at any time take place; but I am restricted: I hope therefore, should any blame be attached, in consequence of the want of Tourniquets or other articles, that I may not be censured. I have the honor [&c.]

E. Cutbush surgeon.

ALS, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 83.

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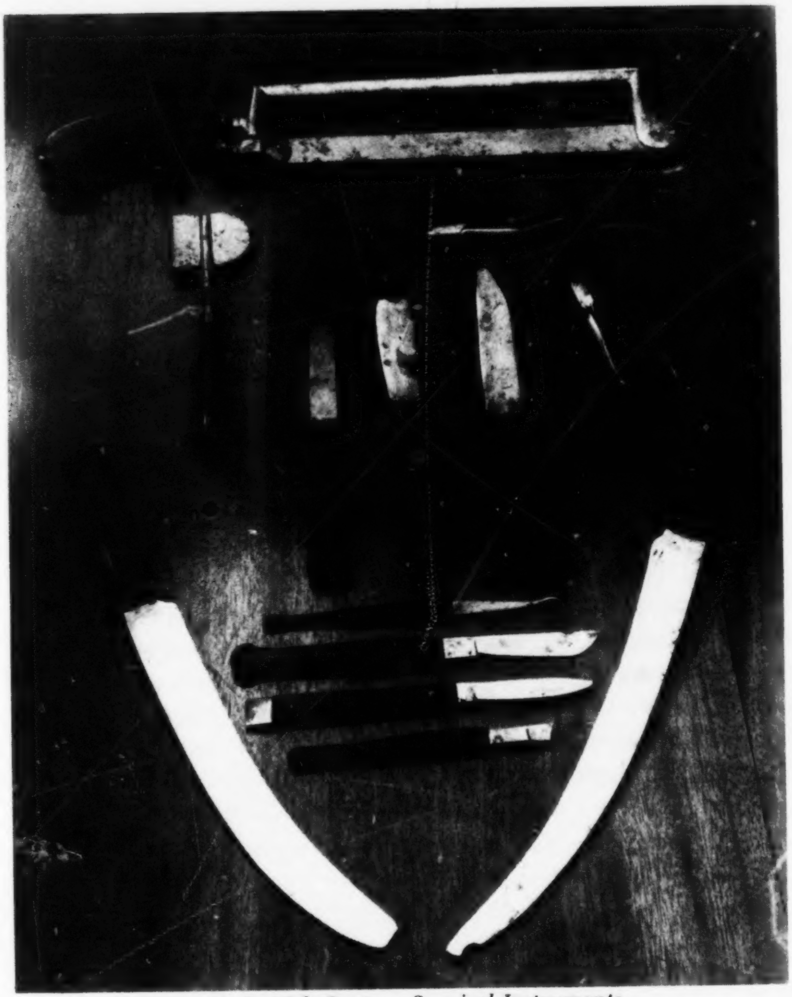

Early 19th-Century Surgical Instruments
Shown, from top to bottom, bone saw, bone scraper, forceps clamp, artery clamp, 3 sizes of knives, suture hook, 3 sizes of scalpels, and 2 curved knives.

Condition of U.S. Frigate *John Adams*

John Adams, *a 32-gun frigate, had been constructed for the navy at Charleston in 1799 by the people of that city, in exchange for government securities, just as* Essex *had been contributed by the city of Salem. During the Quasi-War with France and the Tripolitan War,* John Adams *saw extensive service, but she was laid up in 1805. At the commencement of the War of 1812,* John Adams *was at Boston when Master Commandant Charles Ludlow received orders to sail her to New York for repairs. The following letter records Ludlow's judgment of her potential as a warship.*

MASTER COMMANDANT CHARLES LUDLOW TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

U.S. Ship *John Adams*
Frog's Point July 9th 1812

Sir

I receiv'd orders from Commodore William Bainbridge of the 2nd Inst to proceed to New York with the Ship *John Adams* under my Command, & report myself to the Navy Department on my arrival. I sail'd the 4th in Company with the U.S. Brig *Nautilus* and arrived at this place last evening, am now waiting for a wind to take us through Hurle-Gate [*Hellgate*] to the Navy Yard. I had a very good oppertunity to try the Sailing of the Ship, and conceive it my Duty to report the Same. She cannot pass for more than a tolerable Sailing Merchant Ship, and so Crank that a Ship of 20 Guns aught to take her, in what would generally be call'd a topgallant breese for Ships of War.

When I took Command of this Ship from Captn [Joseph] Tarbell he assured me it was his intention to apply to the Department for Orders to rejoin the Ship again, and wished me not to make any alterations. I have not made any of any consequence; but if Captn Tarbell is not to have her, nor any other Commander desirous of the Command (which I will give up with much pleasure) I shall be under the necessity of applying for a Survey on the Ship, & trust can make it appear, that as a Corvette she will answer as a Vessel of War, but at present she is unworthy the name of an American Ship of War, and I should very reluctantly hazard the reputation of her Officers, & that of the Service; in her present state; she will be consider'd by the Public; & particularly by any vessel she may have to contend with, as a 32 Gun Frigate, when she mounts but 32 Guns.[1]

With due deference have I made the above report & hope have not exceeded the bounds of rectitude. With highest respect [&c.]

Ch^s^ Ludlow

ALS, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 84.

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[1] Secretary Hamilton left the mounting of additional guns on board *John Adams* to the discretion of Captain Isaac Chauncey, commandant of the New York Navy Yard, noting that some of Tarbell's previous alterations were not "judicious." See Tarbell to Hamilton, 30 July 1812, DNA, RG45, MC, 1812, Vol. 1, No. 82 and Hamilton to Chauncey, 15 Aug. 1812, DNA, RG45, CNA, Vol. 1, p. 313.

Shortages of Arms and Ammunition

The urgent readying of warships for sea drew down the ordnance stocks of the Washington Navy Yard to an alarming degree. Commodore Tingey, facing constant requisitions from naval stations at Gosport, Wilmington, and Charleston, expresses his concern over the situation in the following two letters, written only six days apart.

COMMODORE THOMAS TINGEY TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Navy Yard Washtn
9th July 1812

Sir

I am honor'd with your instructions of 7th instant: directing the shipment of sundry articles to Savanna for account of the Department of War.

Of those articles, we can at this time supply only the Match rope for, of 18 Pdr round shot we have not one, over the indent for the frigate *Constellation* of 24 Pound round shot, we have not one in the yard, since the departure of the frigate *Constitution*. Of the 100 barrels gun powder lately by your order to be shipped to Charleston, I could ship only 50, and have not above 10 left in the Magazine, nor have we more port-fire than necessary for the *Constellation*, and other immediate wants. A vessel is now at the Yard, ready to sail for Charleston, by which I shall with your approbation ship the materials for Captn Dent. I have the honor

Tho^{s}: Tingey

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 99.

Commodore Thomas Tingey to Secretary of the Navy Hamilton

Navy Yard Washtn 15th July 1812

Sir

The Indents for the frigate *Constellation* state the want of one hundred Muskets & bayonets, fifty pair of pistols, and one hundred Cutlasses; of the two former we have none fit for use-and of the latter only sufficient for the Gun boats, about to be send from this yard-and those not of very good quality. I enclose also a list of articles in her indents, not attainable in this vicinity, and beg leave to recommend that they be ordered from Philadelphia[1] I have the honor [&c.]

Tho^{s}: Tingey

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 112. Endorsed at foot of letter: "20 July wrote to G[eorge] Harrison for the small articles, to Chauncey for the Muskets pistols & Cutlasses."

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[1] Enclosure not found.

The Return of *Chesapeake*'s Seamen

For more than four years, the United States and Great Britain negotiated fitfully over H.M.S. Leopard*'s unopposed cannonading of the frigate* Chesapeake *and the impressment of four of her crew in 1807. The insult rankled American opinion to the degree that it is considered to be an indirect cause of the War of 1812. Finally, however, the British government agreed to a settlement in which it paid indemnities to the victims or their families and returned two of the four seamen who had been impressed.*[1] *Of the other two, one had died in Halifax hospital and the other was hanged as a deserter from the British Navy. The United States accepted the British settlement offer on 12 November 1811, but the two surviving American seamen were not returned until 11 July 1812, too late to have any effect on the state of hostilities. Captain William Bainbridge received the seamen at Boston with an appropriate ceremony, described in the following letter.*

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[1] *For the text of the agreement, see* ASP. Foreign Relations, *III: 499-500.*

CAPTAIN WILLIAM BAINBRIDGE TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Navy Yard Charlestown
11th July 1812

Sir,

I have the honor to inform you that the British Schooner *Brim* [*Bream*], commanded by Lieutenant [John] Simpson, arrived yesterday in this Port; as a flag of Truce from Halifax sent by Admiral [Sir Herbert] Sawyer, to return onboard the Frigate *Chesepeake*, John Strawhaun [*Strachan*], and Daniel Martin, two of the Seamen which were taken by the *Leopard* from the *Chesepeake*. This day the said Men were received in the following manner onboard the *Chesepeake*. viz.

The Commanding Officer of the British vessel brought them on the Quarter Deck of the Frigate-where Lt [Jesse] Wilkinson received the officer, who informed him that Admiral Sawyer had directed him to return those Seamen onboard of the *Chesepeake*, to which Lt Wilkinson (by arrangement) made the following reply

"Sir I am commanded by Commodore Bainbridge, to receive those two American Seamen on the very deck from which they were wantonly taken in time of Peace by a vessel of your Nation of Superior Force" After which the Seamen were brought aft of the Quarter Deck, where I made the following short address to them.

"My Lads, I am glad to see you. From this Deck you were taken by British outrage. For your return to it you owe gratitude to the Government of your Country. Your Country now offers you, an oppertunity to revenge your wrongs, and I cannot doubt but you will be desirous of doing so on board of this very Ship. I trust the Flag that flies on board of her, will gloriously defend you." On which three Cheers were given by a numerous crowd onboard of the Frigate and the Crews of the Gun Boats lying alongside. I afterwards politely invited the British Officer to dine with me. who Accepted with Mr Ruff the Bearer of the Despatches onboard the vessel, for Mr [Augustus J.] Foster the late British Minister. The Despatches by General Dearborns permission have been forwarded by the British Agent here to Mr Foster at New York. I have the honor [&c.]

Wm Bainbridge

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 102.

The Privateer *Matilda*

The rush to go into privateering was not entirely smooth, as the following document indicates. Discipline in privateers varied from ship to ship, and the altercation between captain and crew on board Matilda *offers a case in point. The men had apparently signed on at Philadelphia, but according to this statement by a crew member, one Charles Read, the brutality of one of the officers caused a good number of the crewmen to refuse to sail. Mr. Read wrote directly to the Secretary to describe their plight. Under Article 15 of the Act Concerning Letters of Marque, offenses by either officers or crewmen of privateers were to be tried by a court martial made up of U.S. Navy officers. The disposition of the case is not known, but the incident demonstrates some of the problems that existed for privateersmen on board their own ships.*

CHARLES READ TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

New Castle [Delaware] Goal 13 July 1812

Sir

At the request of 25 of the crew of the Privateer Schooner *Matilda* who with myself were sent to this prison on Satturday last by order of Capt [Noah] Allen of the said Schooner I take the liberty of informing you that in consequence of the Barbarity and threatnings of our Officers we have refused to go the cruise for which we had engaged. but previous to this refusal we wrote a letter to the Capt requesting that the first Lieuftenant (who had staubed a man with a boarding pike and threatened to blow the brains out of many others) might be tried by a Court Martial which was refused; And having been informed that the said Capt Allen has applied to you for the appointment of a Court Martial to try us for the said offence, we also request that a like Court Martial for the trial of the said first Lieuftenant for the Offence above mentioned may be also appointed If Officers are permited to persue such conduct with impunity our seamen will be no longer safe they will have their enemies on all sides and in fact they will have more to fear from the violence of our own Officers than from the real enemy; Our Ignorant Officers in our Privateers begin allready to boast of having Martial law on their side which they seem to consider as a scourge to seamen in my humble opinion it is as much intended to protect the seamen against the violence of their Officers as for any other purpose. The whole crew refused to go in the schooner but when they had got 26 of us in prison they kept the rest on board in hopes they would think better of it and proceed on the cruise. I have the Honor [&c.]

Charles Read

ALS, DNA, RG45, MLR, 1812, Vol. 5, No. 113.

Reducing the Gunboat Crews

In order to provide full complements of crew for the frigates, brigs, schooners, and sloops of the navy, the many gunboats on duty along the Atlantic and Gulf coasts would have to suffer the loss of many of *their men. On the 6th of May, the secretary had found it necessary to withdraw Marines from gunboat crews, and the following letter shows the flotillas were weakened even further.*

CIRCULAR TO COMMANDANTS AND NAVY AGENTS

Navy Depart 14 July 1812

It is the order of the President of the United States, that the gunboats in Commission shall not have exceeding eight men each, exclusive of officers, that is just enough to exercise the gun-the balance of the crew can it is conceived, on an emergency, be made up by volunteers from the neighbourhood of the respective stations of the gunboats; and on such occasions you will beat for volunteers.

The eight men for each may all be able Seamen at the usual wages of 12$ p. month each.

In cases then, where all the gunboats under your command are fully manned, you are immediately to discharge all the surplus exceeding eight, or you may if an opportunity should occur turn them over to any of our public vessels that may require them. If discharged they are to be paid off.

In cases where the gunboats in Commission are some fully manned, others not manned, you are to draft the quota allowed from those fully manned in order to man the others-and this you will do so as to make each boat as nearly equal in efficiency as may be practicable. I mean with respect to the qualities of the crew. If you have not able Seamen enough for the whole, let each crew consist of part able & part ordinary Seamen.

In discharging a due regard must be paid to the public interest and those Seamen in debt to the Department are, being in other respects equal, to be detained in preference to those not in debt. It is indeed desireable that we should avoid discharging any Seamen in debt to the public, and if cases should exist, where it would be proper to discharge them you will retain them until they shall have served sufficient length of time to pay the amount respectively due by them.

Paul Hamilton

Copy, DNA, RG45, CNA, Vol. 1, p. 302.

Barges for Georgia

In an interesting communication, Captain John Dent informed the secretary that he would send six barges built at Charleston to Sunbury, Georgia. The design of these barges is uncertain, but they may have been similar to those built at the Washington Navy Yard by William Doughty in 1813.[1] *If so, they were row galleys about 50 feet in length and 12 feet in the beam, with a depth of 3 feet, 6 inches. In Charleston, these barges were worked by slaves, but this was not to be the case in Georgia. This document provides an instance where the use of slaves in naval vessels was countenanced and probably reflects the relative scarcity of white seamen for such drudgery, as well as the common use of slaves in maritime pursuits in the South.*

[1] *Chapelle,* American Sailing Navy, *p. 276.*

CAPTAIN JOHN H. DENT TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Charleston. 17th July. 1812

Sir

Your letter of the 9th inst. I had the honor to receive.[1]

The Six barges built here are now in complete order, and have entered into the active Service designed them in rowing guard at the Bar, during the night, and visiting the inlets &c. I shall dispatch them to Sunbury (Georgia) agreeable to your order, as soon as I can obtain men to replace the 10 blacks now on board each boat. They are slaves belonging to this port and shipped for six months, if required, and not to be taken out of the State. The Acting Masters and mates were engaged on the same conditions and am afraid will not proceed to Sunbury. That shall not detain the boats as Masters of vessels may be had to perform that Service. I shall have six more barges built agreeable to your order. The two barges that left this yesterday for Beaufort, had not proceeded far when your order was received. I have ordered them back.

In constructing and arming *No 9* for a Guard-ship, I never anticipated that she was to be ordered to Sea but merely intended to be a depot for the Barges, and act in this harbour where little movement is required. The Waters of Port Royal require a vessel of easy draft of water, that will work and sail well, to carry one long heavy Gun & 8 smaller. None of these requisites does *No 9* possess. She cannot go through the inland navigation, and shall I be obliged to dismount her 32 pounders and have her ports caulked up and a vessel to attend her in going round, as she does not sail or work well, having two thirds of her above water and very lightly rigged. I think her illy calculated for the service you intend her for that I will wait untill I receive an answer to my letter of 7th inst enclosing a communication from the city council of Beaufort through General [Thomas] Pinckney relative to a vessel in Beaufort. I Have the Honor to be [&c.]

J H Dent

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 115.

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1. Hamilton to Dent, 9 July 1812, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 10, p. 83. The secretary's letter of 9 July was copied in the letterbook out of chronological sequence, among letters dated 1-2 July.

Prizes Taken at St. Marys

Captain Hugh Campbell's gunboats moved quickly once the news of war arrived. The following letter reports the taking of seven ships, probably the first British ships to have been captured by U.S. gunboats during the War of 1812.

CAPTAIN HUGH G. CAMPBELL TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

St Marys, Georgia
18th July 1812

Sir

Herewith I have the honor to enclose a List of British Vessels Captured and detained on the 29th and 30th ult. in consequence of my orders to the different commanders of the Public Vessels under my Command. You will be pleased to observe sir, that several of these vessels were taken within the Spanish waters, being under the impression that Spain would be viewed as an alley of Great Britain, likewise that our Flag has been flying for months past on the Banks of Amelia, from thence to the walls of St. Augustine, Which Gave us the Control of that Part of the Country, Consequently the Waters of the same I have the Honor to be [&c.]

Hugh G Campbell

A List of British Vessels detained, by the Squadron of Gun Boats, on the St. Marys Station.

Ship *Emperor* of London 575 Tons, Abraham Bound Master Navigated by 8 men, seized on the 29th day of June 1812, on the North Breaker under English Colours, bound to a Port in Great Britain, with a Cargo of ranging Timber

Ship *Experiment* of London 309 41/94 Tons, James Rutherford Master, Mounting 8 Guns, Navigated by 8 men, seized on the 29th day of June 1812, on the River St. Marys under English Colours, bound to a British port, with a Cargo of Ranging Timber.

Brig *Adventure* of Kirkaldy of 157 4/94 Tons James Walker Master Mounting two Guns, Navigated by   men, seized on the 29th day of June 1812, under English Colours, bound to a Port in Great Britain, with a Cargo of Ranging Timber

Brig *Camilla* of New Castle of 281 16/94 Tuns, Robt Coss master mounting 4 Guns, Navigated by 10 men, seized on the 30th day of June 1812 in Bells River, under English Colours bound to a Port in Great Britain, with a Cargo of Ranging Timber

Schooner *Adventure*   Bradshaw Master Without Papers or Crew, seized at Amelia the 6th day of July 1812 under English Colours, nothing on board except two negroes

Schooner *Wade* Grand Cacios 88 90/94 Tons, Wm Johnston Master navigated by five men, seized on the 6th day of July 1812, at the entrance of the River St. Marys, under British Colours from Nassau New Providence, With a Cargo of Turtles and pine apples, 4 negro slaves on board.

Pine apples and Turtles sold at Auction

Schooner *Trimer* New Provi-
dence, John Pinder, of 23
Tons, navigated by 4 men, seiz-
ed by Mr. George Tomlin
Commanding Gun Boat *No 10*,
on the 9th day of July 1812,
Comeing in the St. Marys
River, under British Colours,
from Nassau New Providence,
with a Cargo of Pine apples
and four thousand four hun-
dred and Eighty nine dollars
and 6/100 in specie-3 negro
slaves on board-Pine apples
sold at auction

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 121.

Sloop of War *Wasp* Refitting for Sea

There were four Wasps *that saw naval service for the United States during the War of 1812.*[1] *The two that achieved fame were both sloops of war. The first was built at the Washington Navy Yard in 1806, carried 18 guns, and was commanded by Master Commandant Jacob Jones at the onset of the war. The second, a larger ship carrying 22 guns, was built at Newburyport, commissioned in 1814, and put under the command of Master Commandant Johnston Blakely. During the summer of 1812, Jones's* Wasp *was being refitted at Philadelphia in preparation for a cruise that had a short duration commencing in October 1812. The following letter contains Jones's report concerning the progress of the refit and ship's personnel.*

[1] *For further information on these ships, see* Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships, *8 vols. (Washington, D.C., 1959–1981), VIII (W–Z): 139–41.*

MASTER COMMANDANT JACOB JONES TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

U.S.S. *Wasp* Philada 21st July 1812

Sir

An alledged or a real scarcity of carpenters here, has rendered it impossible for us to have had our tops ready before to day. We shall have them this evening & will be riged & ready for sea the day after tomorrow.

Several of our men have claimed their discharges to day, alledging they are british subjects &, I've discharged them, ordering those of them whose times have expired to be paid off, & those who had the greater part of their time to serve, to receive nothing; inconsequence of their having placed themselves upon us to serve their own purposes under the characters of Americans, at a time when there was no imperious demand for them.

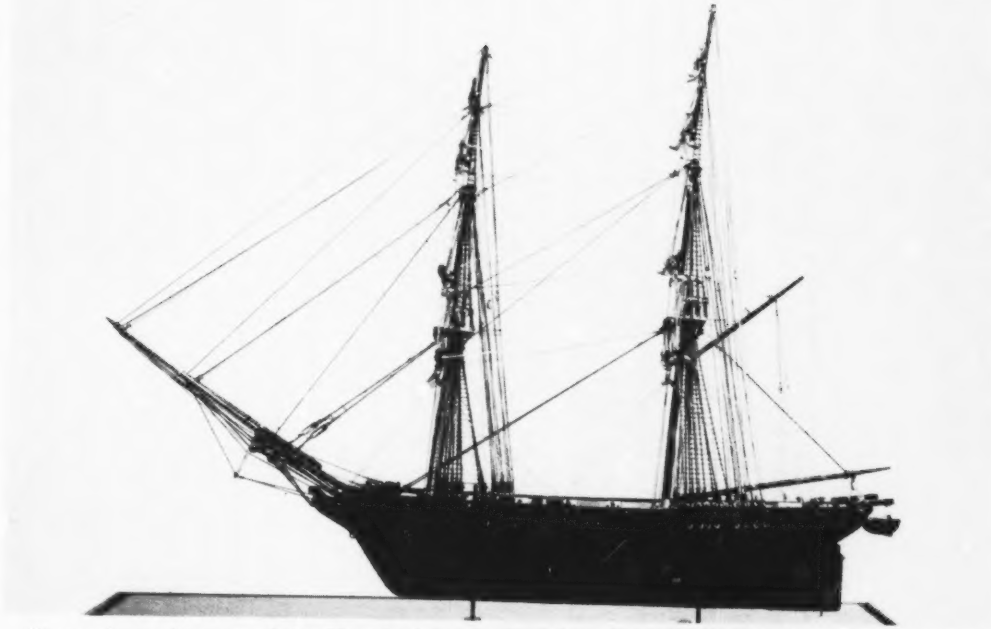
The Midshpn have joind the Ship, but the Surgeon or mate, which I believe it was your intention to order to us, has not yet appeared. If it may be consistent with your arrangements to let us have another commissioned & experienced Lt, in addition to those We have, I should be much gratified. I am respectfully yr

Ja^{C} Jones

ALS, DNA, RG45, MC, 1812, Vol. 1, No. 79.

Perry Sends News about *Constitution*

During the first months of the war, Lieutenant Oliver H. Perry was in charge of gunboats stationed at Newport, Rhode Island. Anxious to obtain a more important command, Perry wrote frequently to the Navy Department keeping the secretary informed on the events as they occurred. Cartels occasionally arrived and departed from Newport, and by this means, Perry obtained shipping news from American prisoners who had been paroled. Though not always reliable, there was usually an element of truth in these reports, hence their usefulness for shipowners and commanders about to put to sea. The following letter



Wasp, *shown here as a brig. Her rigging was altered to that of a sloop before commissioning.*

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comments on the loss of Nautilus *and* Constitution*'s recent escape from a British squadron.*

Lieutenant Oliver H. Perry to Secretary of the Navy Hamilton

Newport July 26 1812

Sir

By Captn Blunt who arrived a few moments since in company with a number of masters of vessels taken by the English, I am informed of the unfortunate circumstances of the capture of the U. States Brig *Nautilus* Lt [William M.] Crane, by the British Squadron (mentioned below) after a chase of 6 hours on the 16th Inst. It appears the wind was fresh, and a heavy sea on-the frigates out carried her-I also send you a list of vessels taken and destroyed by this Squadron.

Capt [James R.] Dacres of the *Gurrier* told one of the Masters arrived here, they intended on receiving a reinforcment to make an attack on New York. The probability is, from the course they were steering when the vessel who brought those persons in, left them, they are now off Montaug, distant about 40 miles from this place. The Masters and Seamen of the vessels captured, are sent in on parole. The *Nautilus* is sent to Halifax, with only Lt Crane onboard, the officers and crew continue on board the *Africa*.

It affords me the greatest pleasure to communicate to you Sir, the testimony all bear who witnessed Capt Hull's (of the *Constitution*) conduct when chased by the English Squadron to use the language of the Masters who were onboard of the different English ships at the time-"it was elegant"-they say also, that neither of British frigates dare approach him seperately. Respectfully [&c.]

O. H. Perry

ALS, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 110.

[Enclosure]

Report of Vessels taken &c by the British Squadron consisting of the following Ships of war viz.

Africa	64	Guns mountg	76
Shannon	38	" "	48

Guriere	38	"	"	48
Belvideira	44	"	"	–
Eolus	38	"	"	–

1812			
July	6th	Brig *Minerva* of Plymouth sent to Halifax	
"	9	Ship *Brutus* of Portsmouth N.H.	burnt
"	"	Schoor *Mount Hope* of Nantucket	Do
"	10	" *Argus* of New York	Do
"	11	Ship *Mecanic* of Philadelphia	Do
"	12	" *Oronoke* of New York sent to Halifax	
"	"	" *Elisa Gracie* Do	burnt
"	13	Brig *Illuminator* of Boston sent to Halifax	
"	14	Schooner *Fame* do	burnt
"	15	" *Emerant* do	do
"	16	" *Citizen* of Falmouth	do
"	"	" *John & George* of New York captured & lost in chase	
"	"	U.S. Brig *Nautilus*, sent to Halifax, the officers & crew excepting the Commander who remained onboard the Brig was taken onboard the *Africa*.	
"	23	Schooner *Eleonora* of Boston	burnt
"	"	Brig *Dispatch* of New Haven most part of her cargo distroyed & 155 American prisoners put onboard her & permitted to proceed to the U.S.	

Lat:38°:56" Long: 70°:26"

The above has been handed me by one of the Masters who was captured by the above Squadron.

O. H. Perry

DS, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 110. The last sentence and signature are in Perry's hand.

The Licensed Trade

British land and naval forces were locked in a struggle against the French when the War of 1812 commenced, but they had a continuing need for supplies, particularly grain, flour, and naval stores which had customarily been purchased in North America. Thus, even though the United States had declared war, the British countenanced trade with those Americans willing to continue. In order to protect American ships involved in trade that supported British armies in Portugal and Spain, the consulates were authorized to issue documents in favor of such ships. They instructed British warship commanders to release, assist, and protect the ship they had halted. In the following memorandum, Vice Admiral Herbert Sawyer, commander of British ships on the North American station, advises the captains under his command that such licenses were being issued.

VICE ADMIRAL HERBERT SAWYER'S MEMORANDUM ON THE LICENSED TRADE

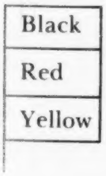
(Copy) *Centurion* at Halifax 27th July 1812
Secret Memorandum

The former minister of his Majesty in America having granted 180 numbered Licenses and 5 distinct ones for vessels under American, Portuguese and Swedish colors to carry provisions to the Armies in Spain & Portugal, and return in ballast, and further 14 for American vessels loaded with wood for the Dock Yards in England. 30 for those loaded with cattle & flour for the West Indies and the government of New Brunswick having given permission to American Merchant Vessels loaded with provisions for St. Johns, and to take English Merchandize in return; and the following vessels viz. *Bingham*, *Stag Harriet*, *Orion*, & *Centurion*, are under such circumstances, as to be particularly protected, and can pass without fear of being molested by any of his Majestys vessels, as vessels being employed in an innocent commerce, and according to the intention herein expressed; and vessels which are provided with licenses from his Excellency Sir John C. Sherbrooke, to import provisions to Halifax, are free from detention. I have likewise granted 20 protections to Mr. Robert Elwell for vessels loaded with flour and other provisions for Spain & Portugal. And I have written a letter to Mr Andrew Allen, his Majesty's Consul in Boston, specifying that all vessels having a Copy of that letter among their papers, certified by him under the English Consulate Seal, with such Articles as are before specified, and bound to the before mentioned Countries, are to be protected by his Majesty's vessels under my command, you therefore govern yourself accordingly.

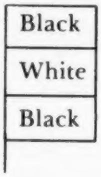
12 August 1812

There has been written a letter subsequent to the above order, to Chevalier [Luis] D'Onis, His Catholic Majesty's Minister in America, something similar to that written to Mr. Allen, on the same subject.[1] Accordingly all vessels having a Copy Certified by him are to be protected. I have granted a protection to Mr Charles Bradford, to import a cargo of dry goods to a port in the United States & likewise one to Mr Elijah Mix, their vessels will hoist the following flags on the approach of any of his Majesty's vessels.

The first



The Second



By order of the Vice Admiral
(Signed) William Ayre
Secretary

Copy, DNA, RG45, CL, 1813, Vol. 1, No. 26 (enclosure).

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[1] See p. 492.

A Merchants' Petition

The merchants of Salem, Massachusetts, sent the petition which follows to the Navy Department, asking for the stationing of gunboats to protect their harbor. As can be seen, they had lost no time in fitting out ships for privateering after the declaration of war. The eagerness with which privateersmen made ready for sea seems to have been general along the Atlantic coast. According to the account of George Little, a merchant seaman who shipped on board the privateer George Washington *out of Norfolk, the atmosphere was electric at both Baltimore and Norfolk in late June and early July 1812. "When we arrived in Baltimore, I found the most active preparations were in progress to prosecute the war. A number of privateers were fitting out; and everywhere the American flag might be seen flying, denoting the places of rendezvous; in a word, the most intense excitement prevailed throughout the city. . . ," and at Norfolk, "on the morning of July 20th, 1812, the officers and crew being all on board, [the ship] weighed anchor, made sail, and stood down the river, with the stars and stripes floating in the breeze, was saluted with a tremendous cheering from the shore."*[1]

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[1] *George Little,* Life on the Ocean; or, Twenty Years at Sea: Being the Personal Adventures of the Author *(Boston, 1851), pp. 194–96.*

Salem Merchants' Petition to Secretary of the Navy Hamilton

Salem July 27 1812

The undersigned merchants and citizens of the Town of Salem (State Mass) had the honor, a short time since, to address you on the exposed situation of this harbour. Since which period the danger of an attack from the Enemy's boats is greatly increased from the number and activity of the private armed vessels fitted out. Eight privateers, carrying about 400 men, were added and Equipped within ten days after the declaration of War was received. Three ships carrying from 16 to 20 guns and from 100 to 200 men are in a state of forwardness, one of which will sail this day, and a number of others are preparing. The number of prizes already sent in amount to sixteen sail, and a number more are known to be captured. Many of the prisoners taken in these prizes are about to return to Halifax to be exchanged. They will carry with them a full knowledge of our exposed situation, and the number of armed vessels as well as prizes in the port, we therefore earnestly request that 2 Gun boats may be stationed in our harbour, as soon as possible, that they may aid the fort and citizens in the event of an attack. We are, respectfully, yours &c. &c.

Robert Stone
Henry Prince
Jon^{a} Neal
James Chever
W Crowninshield
Jos White Jr
Joseph Rofus
M Townsend
Ja^{s} Devereux
Butler Fogerty
William Silsbee
Rob^{t} Stone Junr
Henry Elkins
Jos Winn
Joshua Dodge
Jos E Sprague
Jno W Treadwell
Will K Lee
John Dodge

DS, DNA, RG45, AF 7, 1812.

Isaac Hull Prepares for Independent Operations

Having narrowly escaped capture by Commodore Broke's squadron off New York during the middle of July, Captain Isaac Hull sailed Constitution *into Boston harbor on 26 July for replenishment and news of Commodore Rodgers' squadron. To his considerable disappointment,* *Hull found neither orders nor news awaiting him and had to make his own plans for cruising. This he did with some reluctance, as can be seen in the two letters that follow. He was evidently discomforted by the large responsibility of departing without official approval of his plans. Nonetheless, he set his course for the shipping lanes east of the Gulf of St. Lawrence where he was most likely to encounter British merchantmen and men-of-war. It was in these waters that he was cruising, not without success, when he met H.M. frigate* Guerriere.

CAPTAIN ISAAC HULL TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

U.S. Frigate *Constitution*
Off Boston July 28th 1812

Sir,

I have the Honour to inform you that the *Constitution* under my Command, has this moment arrived off the Light house at this place, without having seen any thing except American vessels, since leaving the British Squadron.[1] There has not been as yet any of the Enemies Cruizers in this Bay, nor have any been spoken on this part of the Coast, great numbers of vessels are daily arriving from different Ports of Europe and the West Indies. Eight or Ten Sail are now in Sight standing in, several of which I have warned off the Southern Ports and advised them running for this Place. I regret extremely being obliged to come into Port but, you will recollect that in consequence of being bound to New York, I took only Eight weeks Provisions, nearly three weeks of which is expended, which leaves me too little to think of making a cruise, of any length. Indeed I could hardly get off Halifax, or any other Port of the same distance, to remain any time, before I should be obliged to return.

This with a hope of getting some instructions from New York, or receiving instructions here from you has induced me to call in. Indents for the Provisions will go to town this Evening, and I have directed the Agent to work night and day until they are furnished, so that the Ship will be ready for Sea in three days at Most. Should I not by the time she is ready get instructions from New York, or find some at this place I am at present under the impression that I shall proceed to Sea and run to the Eastward, and endeavour to join the Squadron,[2] and if I am so unfortunate as not to fall in with them I shall continue cruizing where (from information I may collect) I shall be most likely to distress the Enemy. Should I proceed to Sea without your further orders, and it should not meet your approbation, I shall be very unhappy, for I pray you to be assured in doing so I shall act as at this moment I believe you would order me to do, was it possible for me to receive orders from you.

I am confident that it is your wish that the Ship should be at Sea, and I am equally confident that this Bay will not remain long without some force, and in all probability a force of Two Frigates will be sent here, as it appears the Enemy have been disappointed in blocking up the Squadron in New York. They can now seperate into Cruizing Squadron which they probably will do. As it is impossible for any of our ships to calculate what Ports they may be obliged to enter would it not be well to have instructions left for them at all the Ports where Ships of War can enter, that they may proceed immediately on Service again after they have took in Such Stores as they stand in need of. As they can generally get in, and ready for sea in less time than it would take to hear from Washington.

I will write you the moment the Ship is in, and at Anchor, and from time, to time make you acquainted with all my proceedings. I have the Honour to be [&c.]

Isaac Hull

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 145.

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1. Commodore Broke's squadron which unsuccessfully chased *Constitution* during 17-20 July. See pp. 161-65.

2. Commodore John Rodgers' squadron, comprised of the frigates *President*, *United States*, and *Congress*, sloop *Hornet*, and brig *Argus*. The squadron was by this time well to the eastward in search of a British homeward-bound West Indies convoy. See pp. 262-65.

CAPTAIN ISAAC HULL TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

U S Frigate *Constitution*
Off Boston August 2d 1812

Sir,

The wind for the first time since the Ship came in, has hawled so far to the Westward as to enable us to fetch out, and as this Harbour is so difficult to get to Sea from I have determined to run out, having great hopes that my Boat which is now at the Post Office, may bring me letters from you. If she does not I shall indeed be at a loss how to proceed, and shall take a responsibility on myself, that I should wish to avoid, but to remain here any time longer I am confident that the Ship would be blockaded in by Superiour force, and probably would not get out for months.

I had great hopes that Commodore Rodgers had left me some instructions at New York by which I might have got some information what his plans were, and how he intended the Ships to cruize; But my letters from there have come to hand, and not a word have I received from him. It is my intention to run to the Eastward between Georges Bank, and Cape Sables, and from that on to the Bank of Newfoundland to intercept some small convoys that are now about to sail for England. The American vessels that have been taken by the Enemy are about sailing under convoy of the *Plumper*[1] and some other small vessel so that if I should fall in with them no doubt I should be able to take some of them; or should I not fall in with them I shall be in the track of the Havannah convoy which is not far from the Coast, and bound to England.

I have put in shore here, and discharged about Twenty sick and disabled men, and have taken from the Gun Boats the men that were ordered to be discharged from them, my crew is now strong but want exercise. If I can keep from action a few days I promise myself that we shall be able to see any Frigate. I have great confidence in the men, and thus appear in good Spirit.

How the Ship will sail I have doubts. I fear that being obliged to fill her up with Provisions, and water will make some difference, but she will soon grow light. The last information I have of the Enemy, they were S. East of the South Shoal about twenty Leagues, there was also a Frigate a little to the Eastward of Cape Ann, indeed there has been reports that several different Frigates have been seen on the Eastern Coast. Should I not get letters from you, and should proceed as above, I pray you to be assured, that I have done so, with a view of being useful to my country, and of taking a direction, that I supposed you would give me, had I your orders. The force of the Enemy is so Superiour on our coast that it is impossible to cruize with any hope of escaping them, and if we could they have no vessels that we could take, nor should we have any means of arraying them, where by cruizing off the coast we may do them great injury. These Sir, are the Motives that have led me to take the Steps I have, and should they not meet your approbation I shall truly be unfortunate. I have the Honour to be [&c.]

Isaac Hull

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 155.

1. H.M. gunbrig *Plumper*, 12, built at Halifax in 1807.

The First U.S. Navy Loss

The dubious honor of being the first American naval officer to lose his ship to the British went to Lieutenant William M. Crane, commander of the brig Nautilus. *Departing New York on 15 July, Crane was only a few hours out when he sailed within view of Commodore Philip Broke's squadron. After a furious chase, Broke overtook and captured* Nautilus. *It was only two days after this that Hull's* Constitution *brushed with the squadron and made her famous escape. Crane and his men were taken to Halifax where they were held as prisoners of war and then were paroled in September.*

Lieutenant William M. Crane to Secretary of the Navy Hamilton

Halifax July 29 1812

Sir,

I am under the unpleasant necessity of acquainting you with the loss of the United States Brig *Nautilus*,[1] late under my command. I sailed in obedience to your order of the 11th inst[2] on the 15th and passed Sandy Hook at 6 P.M. with the wind fresh and squally at N.b.E standing off E.b.S-at 4 A.M. we had cleared the Hook about 75 miles under reefed top sails and fore Course at 1/4 past 4 discovered five large sails about two points before our weather beam. immediately wore ship turned out the reefs and made all sail the vessel would bear; the Ships bore up and made sail in chase displaying signals which were not understood and hoisted American colours I also hoisted my private signal and ensign which not being answered, continued to carry a press of sail to the Westward. there was a heavy swell from the Northward, and it was impossible to gain the wind from our pursuers. we had many times to take in sail to preserve spars and finally carried away our top mast steering sail boom which was replaced. it was soon evident, that, they were drawing up with us-every manouvre in trimming ship was tried, but this not having the desired effect I ordered the anchors to be cut from the bows, when we appeared to hold way with them. at 9 the wind became lighter and the Brig laboured excessively in the swell. I then ordered a part of the water to be started threw over her lee guns, and a part of the round shot, she was instantly relieved and bore her canvass with much greater ease, the wedges were then driven out from the masts and the standing rigging slackened up-at 10 the Squadron hoisted French colours and we saw they neared us fast at 11 the leading ship was within grape distance but owing to the construction of the *Nautilus* she can fire no guns abaft, there was not no chance of escape if the chasing vessels were enemies, which we were not certain of as they still kept French colours flying-at 12 the leading ship was within musket shot when I destroyed the signals Signal books and the despatches with which I was entrusted at 1/2 past 12 I consulted with my principal officers all were of opinion, that, everything had been done to preserve the vessel, and, that no hopes of escape were left. I then took in studding sails and light sails trained the weather guns aft and put the helm a lee-the chaseing ship put her helm up hoisted a broad pendant and English colours and ranged under my lee quarter-unable to resist I was compelled to strike the Flag of the United States-I have been particular in detailing to you Sir, circumstances as they occurred in order to prove to you that no efforts were wanting to effect our escape-it is but justice to my officers and crew to add, that, they executed my orders with promptness and rendered me every possible assistance and I feel persuaded had an opportunity offered of engaging anything of equal force they would have distinguished themselves-The Frigate hoisted out her boats and sent for me on board She proved to be the *Shannon* of 38 Guns Commodore Broke, the other vessels of the Squadron were *Africa* 64 Guns Cpt [John] Bastard *Guerrier* 38 Guns Cpt [James R.] Dacres *Belvidera* 36 Guns Cpt [Richard] Byron *Aeolus* 32 Guns Cpt Lord Townsend [James *Townshend*]-my officers and crew were sent on board the *Africa* I remained with the *Nautilus* The treatment I received from Commodore Broke was polite and gentlemanly-we arrived here last evening-if it is not improper I beg leave to request your interference in having me exchanged as I feel great unwillingness to remain inactive at this time. very Respectfully [&c.]

W. M. Crane

ALS, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 114.

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1. Built in 1799 as a merchant vessel, *Nautilus* was purchased by the navy in 1803. She was originally rigged as a schooner armed with 12 6-pounders. In 1810, she was altered to a brig carrying a battery of 12 18-pound carronades.

2. Secretary Hamilton's orders of the 11th directed Crane to depart New York without delay for the purpose of finding Commodore Rodgers' squadron and to deliver a letter, dated the 10th, which reads as follows: "It is confidently believed that there will be a strong British force on our coast in a few days-be upon your guard-we are anxious for your safe & speedy return into Port." See Hamilton to Crane, 11 July 1812, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 10, p. 93, and Hamilton to Rodgers, 10 July 1812, ibid., p. 91.

LIEUTENANT WILLIAM M. CRANE TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Halifax July 31 1812

Sir

I beg leave to call your attention to the probable situation of the American prisoners belonging to the Navy which may shortly arrive at this place. I have assurances from the Admiral (Sawyer) that they will receive every indulgence allowed to persons in their situation, but should they remain until the winter sets in they will require cloathing and many other necessaries to make them comfortable. I understand I shall be allowed to visit them and examine into their wants. I have no funds nor do I feel authorised to draw on any of the public Officers to furnish both men and Officers with what they may stand in need of. I should be gratified with receiving instructions from you on this subject. my Purser was left sick at New York and has with him the accounts and books of the vessel-it may not be improper to acquaint you, that there are many hundreds of American Prisoners here taken in private armed and merchant vessels and, that, they look with confidence to the generosity of their Government for such assistance as may be thought reasonable and proper. it has been suggested to me that if our Government had an authorised agent for prisoners here to attend to their exchange and wants their hardships might be greatly lessened. I merely mention this circumstance without presuming to offer any opinion. an American gentleman here Mr B.F. Bourne, an Attorney of Boston is well qualified for this situation if it should be thought necessary.[1] You must be sensible Sir that my correspondence with persons in the United States must be limited. I feel it a duty to add that I have received the kindest attentions from Admiral Sawyer. I have been paroled and live in the Town, with certain limits assigned me. will you allow me Sir to ask for your interference with regard to myself I feel extremely desirous of having an opportunity of being useful to my country and I rely on you Sir for the means. very respectfully [&c.]

W. M. Crane

P.S. Since writing the above I have had a conversation with the Agent for Prisoners (Mr [Lt. William, R.N.] Miller an Officer of the Navy a most excellent and humane gentleman) he recommends strongly, that a person should be appointed to the situation before named and says it is the custom of their service to have an officer of this kind residing in an enemies Country. he further states, that his Government cannot furnish beds bedding and cloaths but for the sick. the Government prisoners he has promised me shall be separated from the others and that their Officers may visit them daily, inspect their cloathing cleanliness, and furnish them with any comforts they may require. I learn that all letters written by me or received must be submitted to the inspection of the Agent. I should otherwise enlarge this communication. Respectfully [&c.]

W. M. Crane

ALS, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 122.

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[1] Regarding appointment of an individual to supervise prisoner exchange see Hamilton to Mitchell, 26 Aug. 1812, pp. 227-29, and Hamilton to Mitchell, 8 Sept. 1812, pp. 469-70.

The Need for Additional Surgeons

Surgeon Cutbush had requested authorization from the Navy Department to obtain suitable hospital facilities for seamen on the

Delaware River. In the following letter, he discusses the problem again and mentions various difficulties encountered in treating the illnesses of navy men. The lack of trained assistants was a concern that became increasingly apparent as the service strained to accommodate the new demands placed upon it; for surgeons as well as other officers, shortages were critical.

SURGEON EDWARD CUTBUSH TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Philada July 30 1812

Sir,

Agreeably to your instructions of the 9th Inst. I have visited New Castle to procure accommodations for the sick of the squadron of Gun Boats stationed there; I have not yet succeeded, in consequence of the objections which the owners of vacant houses have to employ them for this purpose, Mr. Riddle, however, thinks that he will be able to procure a small house in a few days. I received your order of the 28th inst:, and have directed Dr [William P. C.] Barton to attend the rendezvous for the *Constellation*. I beg leave to suggest the propriety of transporting the Seamen to Washington, with all convenient speed, at this warm season, if effective men are expected; long confinement on board of a Gun Boat may have a tendency to impair their health, where many are crowded together. An old hulk would be preferable. Our sick list of the Gun boats has been numerous from the number confined on board the Gun boat, and a very prevalent diseace which Seamen call the "Ladies' fever", for which, I think they aught to pay something to the Hospital fund, as it is not contracted in the line of their public duty. I have one man under my charge from the *Wasp*; several remaining sick of the Gun Boats' crew; every marine to examine on signing his enlistment, besides the sick of the corps to attend; also the sick at New Castle when the accomodations are prepared, which will require 48 hours to go and return to this station, I must therefore beg leave to solicit two assistants, One to remain at New Castle the other at Philada, Dr. Barton's time will be wholly engaged at the rendezvous for the *Constellation*, if the business be properly attended to; I hope my request will not be considered unreasonable, when the quantum of duty is taken into consideration. I have the honor [&c.]

E Cutbush Surgeon.

ALS, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 120.

British Navy in Action off Halifax

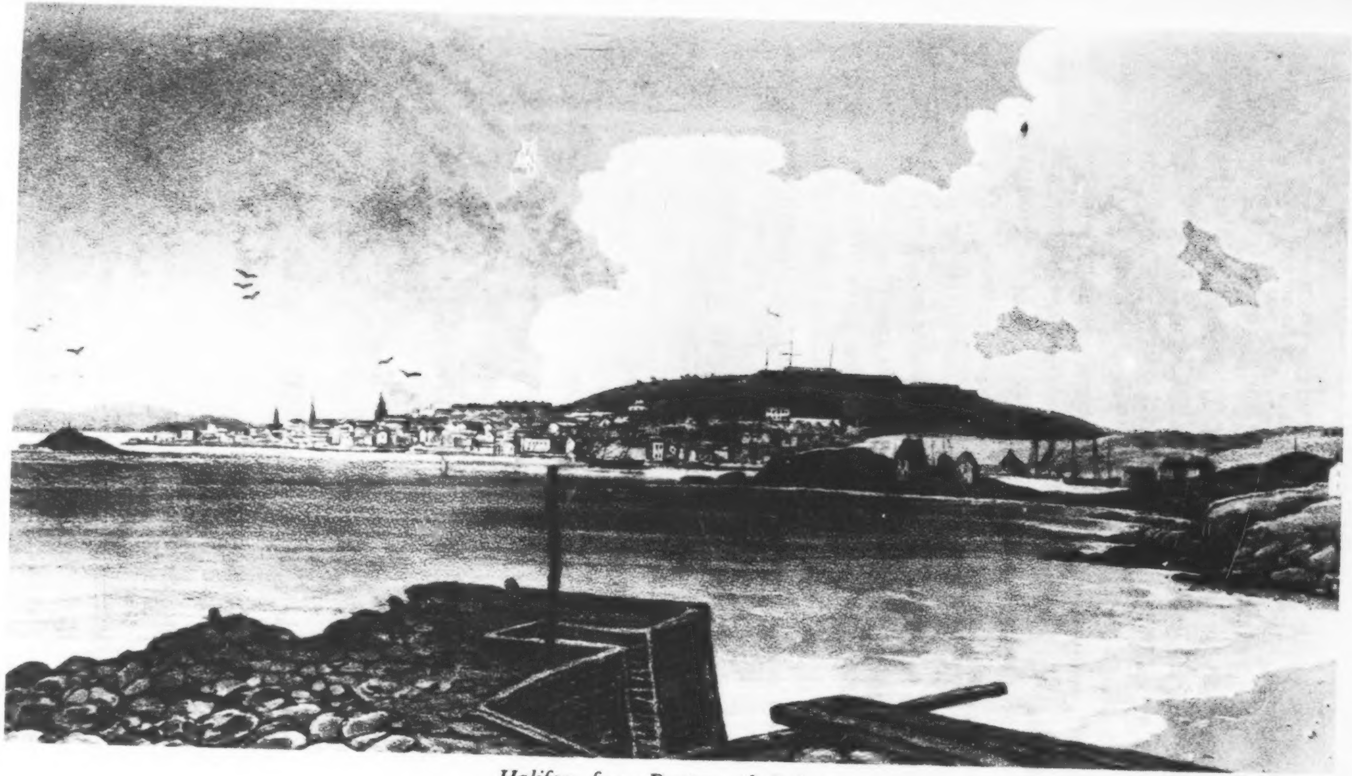
While Captain Broke's squadron was cruising in search of Commodore Rodgers' ships, seizing Nautilus, *and chasing* Constitution *during July, other Royal Navy ships were active in pursuit of Yankee privateers which were infesting the waters around Nova Scotia, particularly in the Bay of Fundy. The following document is one of the first reports of British captures sent by Vice Admiral Herbert Sawyer to the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, following the American declaration of war.*

Vice Admiral Herbert Sawyer, R.N., to
Secretary of the Admiralty John W. Croker

His Majestys Ship *Centurion* at
Halifax, the 2nd of August 1812

Sir,

I have the pleasure to enclose, for the information of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, the Copy of a Letter from Captain Thomson [John *Thompson*] of his Majesty's Sloop *Colibri*, detailing the circumstances attending the Capture of the American Ship Privateer *Catherine* of fourteen long six Pounders, and eighty eight men on the 26th Ultimo, two days previous to which, the *Gleaner* Sloop Privateer of six guns and fifty Men–also of one from Captain [William Howe] Mulcaster of the *Emulous*,[1] stating the Capture of the *Gossamer*, Brig Privateer of 14 Guns and 100 Men, on the 30th ultimo. To these Officers, I am much indebted for their Zeal and activity in protecting the Coast of this Province and the Trade, and in annoying the Enemy since the declaration of War. I cannot therefore suffer this opportunity to



Halifax, from Dartmouth Point

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pass without expressing my highest approbation of their general conduct, while serving under my Command. You will receive enclosed the Copy of another Letter stating the Capture of the American Privateer Brig *Curlew* pierced for 20 Guns, but only 16 mounted, with a Complement of 172 Men, by the *Acasta*, on the 24th ultimo.

I am much gratified that these Vessels were taken so soon after their Sailing, as they would doubtless have done much mischief. The only Vessels taken by them are the *Mary Anne* of Glasgow, and a Barque.

The United States Brig *Nautilus* of 14 guns and 100 Men has been sent in here, by His Majesty's Squadron, under the Command of Captain Broke, but I have received no official account of this Capture, the Squadron being then in Chase of an Enemy's Frigate, which I am concerned to say, effected her escape.

I have to add, three small Privateers have been destroy'd by the *Spartan* and two by the *Indian* in the Bay of Fundy. They carried one or two Guns and between twenty and thirty Men with small Arms. I have the Honor [&c.]

H Sawyer Vice Adml

J. W. Croker Esqr &c &c &c

LS, UkLPR, Adm. 1/502, Part 4, 455. Endorsed below dateline: "R. 10 Sepr." John Wilson Croker was Secretary to the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty.

[1] H.M.S. *Emulous* went aground and was lost off Ragged Island, Nova Scotia, 2 Aug. 1812. See Mulcaster to Sawyer, 3 Aug. 1812, UkLPR, Adm. 1/502, Part 4, 467-71.

Captain Porter's Cruise

Captain David Porter's frigate Essex, *32 guns, had been ordered to sail with Commodore Rodgers' squadron in June, but Porter's reports concerning* Essex's *faulty spars and weed-encrusted hull convinced Rodgers that she had to be sent into New York for an overhaul immediately.*[1] *On 22 June, Captain Isaac Chauncey, commandant of the New York Navy Yard, reported that his men had careened* Essex, *cleaned and repaired her copper bottom, caulked her inside and out,* *and replaced her masts.*[2] *Porter weighed anchor on 3 July commencing a highly successful cruise during which he ranged from the Grand Banks to Bermuda, capturing nine ships, including H.M. brig* Alert. *The four letters that follow reflect Porter's aggressive spirit and initiative, qualities that he exploited to the fullest on his cruise in the Pacific during 1813–1814.*

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1. *Porter to Rodgers, 31 May 1812, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 10.*
2. *Chauncey to Hamilton, 22 June 1812, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 52.*

Captain David Porter to Secretary of the Navy Hamilton

U.S. Frigate *Essex*
At Sea Augt 2d 1812
Lat 45°N Long 49°W

Sir,

I have the honor to inform you that I have this day captured the British Ship *Nancy*, and put Midn Joseph L Biggs on board as prize Master, with instructions to proceed to the United States & make the first port he could.

I have also just captured the British Brig *Hero*, but owing to her having no cargo, & being an old defective vessel have thought it adviseable to burn & scuttle her.

By former communications I have informed you of my having captured & ransomed the British transport *Samuel & Sarah*, and captured & sent in the brigs *Lamprey* & *Leander*. I have the honor to be [&c.]

D Porter

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 154.

Captain David Porter to Secretary of the Navy Hamilton

U.S. Frigate *Essex*
At Sea Augt 8th 1812
Lat 45° 40′N Long 40°W

Sir,

I have the honor to inform you that I have just captured the British Brig [*King George*][1] and have put Midn [Richard] Dashiell on board as

Prize Master.[2] I enclose you a letter intended to have been sent by the Prize Ship *Nancy*. after writing the enclosed letter I fell in with & captured the British Brig *Brothers* having 62 prisoners on board captured by the American private Armed Schooner the *Rossie* Joshua Barney Esqr Comdr on board of which Brig I put 25 prisoners making in all 87 under the command of Midn McKnigh [Stephen D. *McKnight*] whome I furnished with a passport as a Cartel & instructions to proceed to St Johns Newfoundland for the purpose of effecting an exchange of prisoners.[3] I have the honor to be &c. &c.

D Porter

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 169.

[1] Blank in the manuscript.

[2] Porter included a detailed list of prizes taken in his letter of 3 Sept. 1812. See pp. 446–47.

[3] Barney, on this highly successful cruise, had already captured five enemy ships. His *Rossie* took *Brothers* on 1 Aug. and released her after putting his prisoners on board under parole with instructions to make for St. Johns. Porter retook *Brothers* on 3 Aug. and converted her into a prize cartel. This manner of effecting an exchange was quite irregular, as British Admiral Sir John T. Duckworth later pointed out in a letter to Secretary of the Navy Hamilton. See David D. Porter, *Memoir of Commodore David Porter of the United States Navy* (Albany, N.Y., 1875), pp. 95–96.

CAPTAIN DAVID PORTER TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

U.S. Frigate *Essex*
At Sea Augt 15th 1812
Lat 40°N Long 38° 10′W

Sir,

I have the honor to inform you that H B M Sloop of War the *Alert* Capt L P Laugharn [Thomas L. P. *Laugharne*] yesterday at 12 oclock AM ran down on our weather quarter gave three cheers and commenced an action (if so trifling a skirmish deserves the name) and in eight minutes struck her colours with 7 feet water in her hold and three men wounded.[1] I need not inform you that the Officers and crew of the *Essex* behaved as I trust all Americans will in such cases, and it is only to be regretted that so much zeal and activity could not have been displayed on an occasion that would have done them more honor. The *Essex* has not received the slightest injury.[2] I have the honor to be [&c.]

D Porter

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 178.

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[1] *Alert* was the first British warship to be taken by a U.S. Navy ship in this war. Sources vary as to *Alert*'s armament at the time. She was one of twelve colliers that had been purchased for the Royal Navy in 1804. She originally had been fitted with 16 18-pound carronades. Both William James, *The Naval History of Great Britain*, 6 vols. (London, 1886), V: 365–66, and William L. Clowes, *The Royal Navy, A History*, 7 vols. (London, 1901), VI: 31–32, 32n, agree that at the time of the engagement she fought with her original armament. Theodore Roosevelt, *The Naval War of 1812* (New York, 1882), p. 80, disagrees, stating that *Alert* was carrying 20 18-pound carronades at the time of capture.

[2] In a duplicate dated 17 Aug., Porter added the following at this point: "The *Alert* was out for the purpose of taking the *Hornet*!!!" Porter to Hamilton, 17 Aug. 1812, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 181.

CAPTAIN DAVID PORTER TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

U S Frigate *Essex*
At Sea Augt 20th 1812

Sir,

Finding myself much embarrassed by the *Alert*, and from the great number of prisoners we have already made (about 500) I concluded that before our arrival in America the number would be considerably augmented, and as I found my provisions low, water getting short, and being well satisfied that a plan had been organized by them for rising on the ship in the event of an engagement, I considered it in the interest of my country to get clear of them as speedily as possible, particularly as I was well assured that immediately on their arrival in St Johns, an equal number of our countrymen would be released and find a sure and immediate conveyance home. I therefore drew up written stipulations corresponding with the accompanying letters; threw the Guns of the *Alert* overboard, withdrew from her all of the men belonging to the *Essex*, appointed Lieut J [James] P Wilmer to command her as a Cartel, put all the prisoners on board her and dispatched her for St Johns with orders to proceed from thence to New York with such Americans as he may receive in exchange.

At a more suitable opportunity I shall do myself the honor to lay before you copies of every paper relative to this transaction, and sincerely hope that my conduct in this affair may meet with your approbation.

The Capt of the *Alert* informed me that Sailing Master of the *Hornet* had been taken with a prize he was bringing home, and has been carried into St Johns Newfoundland.[1]

The *Essex* has been so anoying about Bermuda, Novascotia & Newfoundland, I expect I have to run the gauntlet through their cruizers, you may however rest assured that all that a ship of her size can do, shall be done, and whatever may be our fate, our country shall never blush for us. I have the honor to be [&c.]

D Porter

P.S. Capt Laugharne informed me that in the engagement between the *President* & *Belvidere* one of the *President*'s Guns burst, & killed 14 men and severely wounded Commre Rodgers that the Capt of the *Belvidere* was wounded in the leg and his ship much cut to pieces, particularly her quarter.

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 182.

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[1] Midshipman David Conner, placed in charge of prize brig *Dolphin*, was captured by H.M. sloop *Hazard*. Exchanged, he merited two congressional medals for his service during the war. As commodore of the Home Squadron during the Mexican War, Conner directed the landing of Major General Winfield Scott's army at Vera Cruz.

Interservice Friction: Marines vs. Army

In most of the wars fought by the armed services of the United States, interservice rivalries have caused problems which had to be thrashed out at the highest levels of the services. The following letter from the commandant of the Marine Corps to Lieutenant James Broom, commanding officer of the marine detachment at Boston Navy Yard, makes it clear that the War of 1812 was not an exception to the rule. Apparently, Lieutenant Broom had yielded to the blandishments of an army officer senior to him and provided a marine guard for some army prisoners. This depleted the small number of marines available for other, more appropriate duties. Franklin Wharton was not one to conceal his views on such an issue.

LIEUTENANT COLONEL COMMANDANT FRANKLIN WHARTON, U.S.M.C., TO FIRST LIEUTENANT JAMES BROOM, U.S.M.C.

H. Q. of the Marine Corps
Washington, Augt 22d 1812

Sir!

I have received your Letters of the 13th & 14th Inst. I do not know the authority by which you were order'd, & which you obeyed in detaching from the Navy Yard, a Guard for prisoners of the Army it will be proper at all times to cooperate with the Military of our Country for the public good, where the particular service in which we are order'd, & which is more or less Naval, will not be injured or frustrated thereby but I must consider it voluntarily done, & not imperative, as we act under the Department of the Navy, and not of War unless so specially ordered by the President of the United States; from a conversation had with the Honourable the Secretary of the Navy you are hereby made acquainted, that your detachment will be relieved by the Army, & you are now required, on such relief being made, to again place it where it was taken from the Navy Yard at Charlestown.

You have made enquiry on some points which at present cannot be fully answer'd, they are in regard to the duties which may be expected from your Men as a Guard, & their priviledges so much difficulty having arisen on the Rights & priviledges of the Sea & Marine Officers when acting together on shore & no alternative left I have submitted the business to the Head of the Department for his Examination, & hope he will direct some system to be formed, which while it will tend to the benefit of the Service, may reduce, if not do away, the difficulty which attends both parties.

I have already written to you about the Supplies for the Barracks, as far as Sacks &c. do I understand you that you now have Carpenters & Masons in the Guard if so how many? I am respectfully [&c.]

F. Wharton,
Lt. Col. Commt.
M. Corps.

Lieut. James Broom,
Navy Yard,
Charlestown, Mas:

Copy, DNA, RG127, CMC, Letters Sent. Lieutenant James Broom was killed in action on 1 June 1813, during the *Chesapeake-Shannon* engagement.

Life at the Gosport Navy Yard

The accommodations for officers and men at navy yards other than Boston, New York, and Philadelphia were far from comfortable as can be discovered by a reading of the following letter from Captain John Cassin to Secretary Hamilton. Habitations were spartan, work was frequently done out in the open, and the condition of the gunboats stationed in the vicinity was discouraging for men who knew they might be called upon to repel a British attack in the near future.

CAPTAIN JOHN CASSIN TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Navy Yard Gosport
25th August 1812

Sir

I have the honor to inform you of my arrival at this place on Sunday last, after a very disagreeable passage of ten days heavy gales & rainey weather and [I am] extremely unwell, but by the assistance of Doctor [Joseph S.] Schoolfield I am much better. I caught a violent cold in the river followed up by going into the house which is too Small entirely for my family and on the first night we had 18 inches water in the cellar, when I was compell'd to call all hands to pump or bail the Ship out. I shall be compel'd to partake of your liberal instructions as it respects my quarters by making two Small wings & kitchen to the House, my Office is too small and under the Hospital whenever they wash it the water runs all over me, books & every thing. I find we are in want of everything to make it like a Navy Yard. on my arrival five Schooner Gunboats were under Sailing orders for North Carolina, two of which I have had to order up to the yard, to heave out again, and in hopes will be able to leave this in all this week. I have ordered Lieut. Henley to Command the Flotilla which is Stationed down below the Town, untill your pleasure is known on the Subject.[1] The Tender will be of infinite Service here & as you had the goodness to Say I might have her I have taken the liberty of reminding you on that Subject.

We are much in want of a Master Blacksmith also a Plumber and Joiner. I should recommend John Bishop & Willm Saunders from King's Shop, also Nicholas Fitzpatrick Joiner, there is a very Smart man Boat builder who formerly worked under me at the Yard, which is now employed at Norfolk by piece work for the Navy, which I do not admire. I would beg leave to recommend him also should it meet your approbation to get me these workmen with the addition of a few Shops to be able to Save a good deal of the out door work, all of which I have the honor to submit for your Consideration. Respectfully [&c.]

John Cassin

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 201. Endorsed at foot of letter: "Entitled to early attention. P.H."

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[1] Lieutenant Robert Henley (1783–1828) who, in 1814, commanded the brig *Eagle* in the Battle of Lake Champlain.

Privateering: A Risky Business

Just as Essex *and* Constitution *were cruising in search of British prizes during July and August, so too were ships of the British Navy patrolling for the opportunity of taking American merchantmen and privateers. The document that follows shows that Royal Navy ships had a good hunting season on the Halifax station, capturing 24 ships. Although Vice Admiral Sawyer considered them all privateers, at least one was not.* Commodore Barry *was a revenue cutter of the U.S. Marine Revenue Service which normally operated under the Treasury Department; in time of war revenue vessels cooperated with the Navy Department.*[1] *One conclusion to be drawn from this is that although privateering excited much interest among investors, sea captains, and seamen, the risk of capture was high. Fortunes were just as frequently* *lost as gained. Investors who placed all their funds into the financing of one privateer might never see her again. Officers and men alike could end up as prisoners of war. Early in the war prisoners held either in Halifax or England were likely to be returned in exchange for British prisoners taken by Americans. However, as the conflict deepened, many American mariners were incarcerated in prison ships or in prisons at such desolate places as Melville Island near Halifax or at Dartmoor Prison outside of Plymouth, England, with infrequent opportunities of being exchanged.*[2]

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[1] Commodore Barry *is described as* "Commander Barry" *in Horatio Davis Smith's* Early History of the United States Revenue Marine Service, 1789-1849 *(Baltimore, 1932), p. 34; but Treasury Department, United States Coast Guard,* Record of Movements, Vessels of the United States Coast Guard, 1790-December 31, 1933 *(Washington, D.C., n.d.), p. 122, describes her as* "Commodore Barry *chartered vessel.*"

[2] *For vivid descriptions of the plight of American prisoners of war, see Charles Andrews,* The Prisoners' Memoirs or Dartmoor Prison . . . *(New York, 1852), and Benjamin Waterhouse,* A Journal of a Young Man of Massachusetts, late a Surgeon on Board an American Privateer . . . *(Boston, 1816).*

"A List of American Privateers taken and destroyed by His Majesty's Ships and Vessels on the Halifax Station between the 1st July and 25th August 1812"

			No of				When Taken		
Names of Vessels Capturing	Names of Prizes	How rigg'd	Men	Tons	Guns	Swivels	Destroy'd &c	Where taken	Remarks
Spartan Captn [Edward Pelham] Brenton	*Active*	Schooner	20		2		16 July 1812	Off Cape Sable	
Indian Captn [Henry] Jane *Plumper* Lieut [James] Bray	*Fair Trader*	"	20		1		" " "	Bay of Fundy	
" "	*Argus*	"	23		1		17 " "	"	
" "	*Friendship*	"	8		1		18 " "	"	
Spartan Captn Brenton	*Actress*	Sloop	53		4		18 " "	Off Cape St Mary	
" "	*Intention*	Schooner	29		1	3	19 " "	Off Annapolis	
Colibri Captn [John *Thompson*] Thomson	*Gleaner*	Sloop	40		6		23 " "	Off Cape Sable	
Acasta Capt [Alexander Robert] Kerr	*Curlew*	Brig	172	270	16		24 " "	Latde 44 15 N Long 62 30 W	Pierced for 20 Guns
Colibri Captn Thomson	*Catherine*	Ship	88		14		26 " "	Off Cape Sable	
Emulous Captn [William Howe] Mulcaster	*Gossamer*	Brig	100		14		30 " "	"	
Maidstone Captn [George] Burdett & the *Spartan* Captn Brenton	*Morning Star*	Schooner	50	70	1	4	1 August "	Bay of Fundy	Burnt by the Boats in a Creek called Baily's Mistake
" "	*Polly*	"	40	60	1	4	" " "	"	

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Names of Vessels Capturing	Names of Prizes	How rigg'd	No of Men	Tons	Guns	Swivels	When Taken Destroy'd &c	Where taken	Remarks
" "	*Commodore Barry* revenue cutter	Cutter			6		3 August	pierced for 10 guns Bay of Fundy	Attack'd in Little River and brought out by the Boats–the chief part of the crew escaped
" "	*Madison*	Schooner			2				
" "	*Olive*	"			2				
" "	*Spence*	"			2				
Colibri and *Statira*	*Polly*	"	35		4		11 " "	Entrance of Bay of Funday	
" "	*Buckskin*	"	32		1	3	" " "	Off Cape Sable	
Earl Moira Tender to the *Guerriere*	*Dolphin*	"	28		1	1	12 " "	Off Shelburne	
Colibri Captn Thomson	*Regulator*	"	40		1		" " "	Off Cape Sable	After an Action of 20 Minutes Enemy had 2 Men Wounded
Colibri and *Maidstone*	*Dolphin*	"	48		2		13 " "	Off Cape Sable	
Hope Tender to the *Africa*	*Lewis*	"	30		6		14 " "	Off Halifax	
Bream Lieut [John] Simpson	*Pythagoras*	"	35		3		9 " "	Off Shelburne	
Belvidera	*Bunkers Hill*	"	72		7		21 " "	Sambro Light House N.W. 242 Miles	

H Sawyer Vice Admiral

DS, UkLPR, Adm. 1/502, Part 4, No. 497.

An American Agent for Prisoners of War at Halifax

Within two months after the declaration of war, numerous seamen had been taken prisoner by American and British warships. As both sides were anxious for the return of their men, a means of releasing and exchanging them had to be determined. After the necessary diplomatic preparations were made, Secretary Hamilton appointed John Mitchell, a Philadelphian, to represent the interests of the United States at Halifax. The following documents contain Hamilton's instructions to Mitchell and notification of his appointment.

Secretary of the Navy Hamilton to John Mitchell

Navy Depart.
26th Augt 1812

You are hereby appointed agent for Prisoners, taken and that may be taken, in our public vessels of war, by British Cruizers.[1]

With this appointment it will be your duty to discuss & arrange, with the proper authority, all points in relation to the exchange of prisoners-and to their personal comfort while in the custody of the enemy, and when exchanged, should the exchange take place in the enemy's country, to provide for their transportation and safe conveyance to the United States. If at the time the exchange should be effected, our Seamen should be in the United States upon their parole, you are to cause the information to be conveyed to them as early as may be practicable-that they may forthwith be at liberty to enter into the service of their Country.

A roll of all persons captured by our Cruizers and allowed to go upon parole or of all that may be so captured and detained as prisoners must be kept by you, and our Commanders will be instructed to transmit to you at Halifax information of all such captures, as may be made by them, stating the disposition made with respect to the prisoners-and in cases, where our vessels may be captured by the enemy, our Commanders will be instructed to transmit to you information thereof, with the rank, station & description of each person on board-and the pursers of our ships will, in such cases transmit to you or deliver to you a roll stating the monthly pay allowed to each person-and the state of the accounts of the Crew.

The principles of exchange will be, rank for rank, man for man. If you can do better, you will of course do so-and when it can be done, without injury, you will in commencing the exchange, pay that respect to rank, to which it is entitled, by giving to the senior officer, tho' of the same class, the preference.

Possessed as you will be of every information in relation to the persons and to the accounts of our prisoners, you will afford to them every comfort in your power-taking care however not to advance to them more than may be due, without the previous approbation of the Commanding officer-where the pursers shall be present the most simple way will be for you to pay over to them, from time to time, upon their requisitions, countersigned and approved by the Commanding officer, such sums of money as may be required, and they will attend to its disbursement, under the direction of the Commanding officer. Indeed this will in every view be the most eligible course; and you will consider yourself instructed to pursue it.

As to the manner of obtaining supplies of money-you will make the best arrangement in your power-giving to me full and timely information upon this and all other points of importance connected with your agency.

For the relief of the crew of the late United States brig *Nautilus*, now detained as Prisoners at Halifax, you will receive an advance of the sum of three thousand dollars out of the appropriation for Pay &c of the Navy-Should you find this sum insufficient, you will under the restrictions herein provided, advance each additional sum as may be necessary-It is confidently hoped that you will be able to effect the exchange of this Crew without delay; and I recommend the subject to your earliest and most earnest attention.

For your services rendered to this Department you will be allowed at the rate of One thousand dollars pr annum commencing from this day. I have the honor [&c.]

Paul Hamilton

P.S: any drafts that you may make on this Department in pursuance of the above instructions, will be punctually honored.

Copy, DNA, RG45, MLS, Vol. 11, pp. 135-36.

1. On 28 Aug., Secretary Hamilton sent a letter to James McKenzie and A. Glennie, whom he referred to as "Navy Agents, London," informing them that he had deposited three thousand pounds sterling in their account and requesting that if they should receive bills from John Mitchell as agent for American prisoners, they should honor them, charging the amounts to the account of the Navy Department of the United States. On the same day, Hamilton wrote to Mitchell, informing him of this action. Hamilton to McKenzie and Glennie, 28 Aug. 1812, and Hamilton to Mitchell, 28 Aug. 1812, both in DNA, RG45, MLS, Vol. 11, p. 138.

CIRCULAR LETTER FROM SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON TO COMMANDANTS AND NAVY AGENTS

Circular

Navy Depart.
27 Augt 1812

John Mitchell Esqr has been appointed agent for Prisoners, and will reside for the present at Halifax.

You will transmit to Mr Mitchell information of all captures made by you and the names of the prisoners and the disposition you may make with respect to them. Should any of our public vessels be so unfortunate as to be taken by the enemy, a minute description of each person on board with the state of his accounts, must be transmitted to Mr Mitchell at Halifax. Mr Mitchell is empowered to arrange the subject of an exchange of prisoners and to provide for the comfortable accomodation of our Seamen, that may fall into the hands of the Enemy.

Paul Hamilton

Copy, DNA, RG45, CNA, Vol. 1, p. 321.

American Shipping

During July and August 1812, many ships which had sailed from American ports before the April embargo was promulgated were homeward bound. They ran the risk of capture by both British and American warships. Many had traded at British ports, as the Orders in Council had been rescinded, but they were vulnerable to charges of having broken U.S. embargo regulations. The following letter contains the instructions of the Navy Department regarding such ships.

Secretary of the Navy Hamilton to Selected Officers

Circular

Navy Dept
28 August 1812

Capt [Alexander] Murray	Philadelphia
Capt [Charles] Gordon	Baltimore
T. [Thomas] N Gautier	Wilmington N.C.
Capt [John H.] Dent	Charleston S.C.
Capt [Hugh G.] Campbell	St. Mary's G.a
Capt [John] Shaw	N Orleans
Comr [John] Rodgers	at Sea
" [Stephen] Decatur	at Sea
Capt [Isaac] Hull	Boston
" [David] Porter	at Sea

The public & private armed vessels of the U.S. are not to interupt any vessels belonging to the Citizens of the U.S. coming from British Ports to the U.S., laden with Merchandize in consequence of the alleged repeal of the orders in Council, but are, on the contrary to give aid & assistance to the same, in order that such vessels & their cargoes may be dealt with on their arrival, as may be decided by the competent Authorities.

P. Hamilton

Copy, DNA, RG45, CGO, Vol. 1, p. 95.

Captain Hull's Cruise

Taking advantage of a westerly breeze, Constitution *weighed anchor and departed Boston harbor on 2 August. Hull shaped a course for Cape Sable, Nova Scotia, and then cruised in the direction of Newfoundland, cutting directly across the shipping lanes into the Gulf of St. Lawrence. During the first two weeks of his cruise Hull took several merchant ships and gathered news of British warships patrolling in the area. One of the ships* Constitution *chased and overtook proved to be the American privateer brig* Decatur, *whose captain informed Hull of a British warship not more than one day's sail from his present position. This news provided a positive lead to the whereabouts of the frigate* Guerriere. *In the following letter, Hull recounts his activities from the beginning of his cruise until the eve of his engagement with* Guerriere.

Captain Isaac Hull to Secretary of the Navy Hamilton

U S Frigate *Constitution*
Off Boston Light, August 28th 1812

Sir

I have the Honour to inform you that after leaving Boston Light on the 2d inst, the date of my last letter to you I stood to the Eastd along the Coast, in hopes to fall in with one of the Enemy's Frigates, which was reported to be cruizing in that direction the day before I left Boston. I passed near the Coast, as far down as the Bay of Fundy, but saw nothing. I then run off Halifax, and Cape Sables, and remained near there, for three, or four days, without seeing any thing, which made me determine to change my situation to the Eastd, towards Newfoundland, I accordingly bore up, and run to the Eastd under all sail, passing near the Isle of Sables, and hauling in, to take a Station off the Gulph of St Lawrence near Cape Race, to intercept the Ships of the Enemy, bound either to, or from Quebec, or Halifax, and to be in a situation to recapture such of our vessels, as they might be sending in.

On the 10th inst being off Cape Race I fell in with a light Merchant Brig bound to Halifax, from Newfoundland, and as she was not worth sending in, I took the crew on board, and set her on fire. On the 11th I fell in with the British Brig *Adeona* from Nova Scotia, bound to England loaded with Timber I took the crew out of her, and set her on fire, and made sail to take station nearer Cape Race; Where we continued cruizing untill the morning of the 15th at daylight when five sail were in sight ahead of us, apparently a small convoy, I gave chace under a press of sail, and soon found that we gained on them very fast, and discovered that one of them was a Ship of War, at Sunrise they tacked, and Stood on the same tack with us, by this time we could plainly discover that the Ship of War had a Brig in tow. At 6 coming up very fast with the Ship and could see that she had cast off the Brig, that she had in tow, and had set her on fire, and had ordered a second Brig to stand before the wind, to seperate them. The Ship of War making sail to Windward I gave chace to a ship which appeared to be under her convoy but when we came up with her, she proved to be a British Ship, Prize to the *Dolphin*[1] Privateer of Salem she had been Spoken by the Ship of War, but we came up with them before they had time to put men on board, and take charge of her, whilst our boats were boarding this vessel the Ship of War had got nearly Hull down from us, and understanding from one of the prisoners that she was a very fast sailer, I found it would not be possible to come up with her before night, or perhaps not then, I therefore gave chace to the Brig that run before the Wind, determined to destroy all his convoy, we soon found we came fast up with the Brig and that they were making every exertion to get off by throwing overboard all the Lumber, Water Casks &c &c.

At 2 PM we brought too the chace and found her to be the American Brig *Adeline*, from Liverpool, loaded with dry goods &c Prize to the British Sloop of War *Avenger*, I took the British Prize Master, and crew out and put Midshipman Madision [John R. *Madison*], and a Crew on board, with Orders to get into the nearest Port he could make. From the prize master of this vessel I learnt that the Brig burnt by the Sloop of War, belonged to New York, and was loaded with Hemp, Duck &c last from Jutland, having gone in there in distress.

Having chaced so far to the Eastd as to make it impossible to come up with the Sloop of War, I determined to change my cruizing ground, as I found by some of the Prisoners that came from this vessel that the Squadron that chaced us off New York were in the Western Edge of the Grand Bank, not far distant from me. I accordingly stood to the Southd intending to pass near Bermuda, and cruize off our Southern Coast. Saw nothing till the night of the 18th at 1/2 past 9 PM, discovered a Sail very near us it being dark, made Sail and gave chace, and could see that she was a Brig. At 11 brought her too, and sent a boat on board, found her to be the American Privateer *Decater* belonging to Salem,[2] with a crew of One Hundred and Eight Men, and fourteen Guns, twelve of which, he had thrown overboard whilst we were in chace of him. The Captain came on board, and informed me that he saw the day before a Ship of War standing to the Southward, and that she could not be far from us. At 12 PM, made sail to the Southd intending if possible to fall in with her. The Privateer Stood in for Cape Race intending to cruize there, and take Ships by boarding as he had lost all his Guns but two. The above is a Memorandum of what took place on board the *Constitution* under my Command from the time we left Boston, up to the 18th inst, which I hope will meet your approbation. I have the honour to be [&c.]

Isaac Hull

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 210.

best copy available

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1. Captain J. Endicott. There were six American *Dolphin* privateers during the War of 1812. Captain Endicott's *Dolphin* carried only 5 guns, but within a few weeks had captured three ships, seven brigs, and six schooners. She had herself been taken several days before Hull spoke her prize. Maclay, *American Privateers*, p. 468n.

2. Brig *Decatur*, 14, Captain William Nicholls, out of Newburyport, not Salem. She took nine prizes during a two month cruise in the summer of 1812. See Benjamin W. Labaree, *Patriots and Partisans: The Merchants of Newburyport, 1764–1815* (Cambridge, 1962), p. 188.

American Prisoners of War at Halifax

The conduct of a naval commander who was captured was sure to be scrutinized after he had obtained his release. But even if this were not the case, a capable officer would continue to look after his men. Lieutenant William M. Crane of Nautilus *showed himself to be zealous in observing the treatment of his men by their British captors. He protested the slightest deviation from the norm, writing directly to Vice Admiral Sawyer, commander in chief of the North American station. Sawyer, too, observed the niceties of conduct toward his captives, though firm on the principles as he saw them. American seamen suspected of being British were sent to England, unless Crane managed to prove they were American. This was a serious and difficult matter. On the other hand, Crane also objected to one of his men being called a "rascal," an objection that Sawayer felt trivial, but nonetheless, the admiral agreed to have the matter investigated. As has been seen in a previous document, the procedures for the parole and exchange of prisoners were being established at the time the following two letters were written.*

Lieutenant William M. Crane to Vice Admiral Herbert Sawyer, R.N.

Halifax August 28th 1812

Sir

I deem it my duty to enquire of you for the information of my government the causes which have occasioned the transportation to

England in his B.M. ship *Thetis* of
Phillip Tully Seamen belonging to Philadelphia where he has a wife and family
Henry McDermot Seamn belonging to Boston
James Snyder Seamn belonging to Norfolk Virginia
George West O. Seamn of New Jersey
John Carr Corpl. of Marines of Staten Island state of N York
Michael Spilliard private marine SchuylKill near Philadelphia where he has a wife and family
composing a part of the crew of the late U.S. Brig *Nautilus*, and also the reasons for the detention of.

Jesse Bates Seamen
Wm Jones O.S.
Jno O Neale do
Jno Rose marine
Wm Young Marine
Saml Lang ditto on board B.M. Ship *Shannon*.
Reuben Williamson Armourer on board the *Africa*

Hugh Dougherty an O.S. late a part of the same crew all of whom voluntarily engaged in the service of the United States and are Citizens of the same.

I learn from my crew that every art was Essayed to induce them to enter the service of his Brittanick Majesty and on their refusal the most insulting epithets were bestowed, they have also been stripped of their cloathing on board the Frigate *Shannon*, the Uniform of the Marines taken from them, and all are now nearly naked. this conduct I feel persuaded Sir, has not been authorised, nor will it be warranted by you. Very respectfully [&c.]

Signed W. M. Crane

Vice Admiral Herbert Sawyer
Commander in Cheif &c. &c.
Halifax

Copy, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 122, filed with Crane's letter to Secretary of the Navy Hamilton of 31 July 1812.

VICE ADMIRAL HERBERT SAWYER, R.N., TO LIEUTENANT WILLIAM M. CRANE

His Majesty's Ship *Centurion*,
at Halifax, the 29th August 1812

Sir,

In reply to your Letter of Yesterday's date, I have to inform you, the six Men you mention lately belonging to the United States Brig *Nautilus*, were sent to England, in His Majesty's Ship *Thetis*, by Captain Broke of the *Shannon*, to be examin'd, there being strong grounds for thinking they are British Subjects and Deserters–that Officer has written the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty about them.

With respect to those consider'd to be detain'd onboard the *Shannon* and to the general accusations made, relative to the ill treatment said to have been receiv'd by the Crew of the *Nautilus*, so contrary to the principles and practice of the British Navy and so derogatory to its high Character, I must wait her arrival, before I can reply; in the meantime, it will be necessary you should furnish me with the names of the Persons who can support what they have alledged, that they may be detain'd till that period.

The *Africa* being here, should any part of your Letter have a reference to the Captain, Officers or Crew of that Ship, you will without delay state it, and the Complainants, that an investigation may take place. I am [&c.]

H Sawyer—Vice Adm

Captain W. M. Crane

P.S. I have omitted to mention that Reuben Williamson is not detain'd on board the *Africa* but was sent to Melville Island[1] with the other Prisoners, and Hugh Dougherty whose dialect denotes his Country, remain'd on board her for conveyance to England, there to be examin'd.

LS, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 122, filed with Crane's letter to Secretary of the Navy Hamilton, 31 July 1812.

1. Melville Island, 3 miles from Halifax, was the location of a small fort and prison barracks where American seamen were held. As the war progressed and prisoners became more numerous, many were sent to Dartmoor Prison in Devonshire, England.

Diplomatic Arrangements for Prisoner Exchanges

During the early months of the war, the British government was conciliatory on diplomatic issues, hoping that the Madison government might be persuaded to end hostilities without full-scale warfare.[1] *Indeed, the Foreign Office wrote to Admiral John B. Warren, who replaced Sawyer in August, instructing him to halt all hostilities if the United States did so after hearing of the revocation of the Orders in Council.*[2] *Admiral Warren wrote in this vein to Secretary of State Monroe on 30 September.*[3] *Thus it is consonant with this attitude that one finds British Chargé d'Affaires Anthony St. John Baker writing to Monroe on 29 August in such a manner as to facilitate the exchange of prisoners in the following letter.*

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[1] *Perkins,* Castlereagh and Adams, *p. 13.*

[2] *See Castlereagh to Foster, 8 July 1812, as printed in Bernard Mayo, ed., "Instructions to the British Ministers to the United States, 1791-1812,"* Annual Report of the American Historical Association, 1936 *(Washington, D.C., 1941), III: 389-90, and Alfred T. Mahan,* Sea Power in its Relations to the War of 1812 *(Boston, 1905; reprint ed., New York, 1969), I: 390-91.*

[3] ASP, Foreign Relations, *III: 595-96.*

Anthony St. John Baker to Secretary of State James Monroe

Washington August 29 1812

Sir,

I have had the honour to receive your letter of yesterdays date in reply to mine of the 26th Inst and acquainting me that the President is willing to enter into an arrangement for the Exchange of prisoners taken at Sea, and that a person will be duly authorized for the purpose as soon as I shall intimate to you with whom and at what place the arrangement may be made.

I shall not fail to take the earliest opportunity of communicating with Vice Admiral Sawyer on these subjects, and will lose no time in transmitting to you the information in question.

In order to prevent any delay in the departure of the prisoners of war who have been so readily and in so satisfactory a manner liberated by the government of the United States, I have authorized the following persons viz: Mr [Andrew] Allen His Majesty's late Consul at Boston, Mr Thomas Wm Moore, late agent of his Majesty's Packet Boats at New York, Mr Alexander Walker, a British subject, and merchant of the highest respectability at Philadelphia who has the superintendance of the departure of His Majesty's Subjects leaving the United States from that port, and Mr Wood his Majesty's late Consul at Baltimore, to receive the prisoners who may be released and to give Certificates for them to the Marshals at those respective places, duplicates of which they will forward to me, upon which will be founded the receipts which I shall have the honour of giving to you, or to any person whom you may be pleased to designate.

I have already written to Vice Admiral Sawyer to acquaint him with the appointment of Mr [John] Mitchell to regulate the concerns of the American prisoners of war at Halifax, and will with the greatest pleasure furnish that gentleman with the letters which may be necessary to facilitate his entrance upon the duties of his situation. I have the honour to be [&c.]

Anthony St Jno Baker

Honble James Monroe
&c &c &c

Copy, DNA, RG45, MLR, 1812, Vol. 6, No. 64. Chargé d'Affaires Anthony St. John Baker succeeded Augustus J. Foster as the principal diplomat from Great Britain in the United States shortly after war was declared.

Constitution vs. *Guerriere*

Captain Hull's cruise to the northward provided valuable information that a British frigate was cruising alone south of Newfoundland,

and he pursued that lead. On the afternoon of 19 August, Constitution *sighted and chased an unidentified warship. After three hours, Hull brought her to action, defeated her, and discovered she was the 38-gun frigate* Guerriere, *Captain James R. Dacres.*[1] *Hull's complete report of this engagement, which follows, is paired with that of his opponent. Captain Dacres's report to his superior, Vice Admiral Herbert Sawyer, was written while Dacres was a prisoner of war in Boston.*

This celebrated battle provided a highlight for the American military during the relatively dismal summer of 1812. Captain Hull's uncle, Brigadier General William Hull, had been forced to surrender his army at Detroit. Isaac Hull's single-ship victory helped to even the score and put the British Navy on notice that her frigates would not be able to sail the North Atlantic with impunity.

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[1] *For a thorough discussion of the battle and the relative strengths of the two ships, see James,* Naval History of Great Britain, *V: 372–88; Roosevelt,* Naval War of 1812, *pp. 88–100; Mahan,* Sea Power in its Relations to the War of 1812, *I: 330–36; and Linda McKee,* "Constitution *Versus* Guerriere," *United States Naval Institute* Proceedings *88, No. 2 (Aug. 1962): 72–79.*

CAPTAIN ISAAC HULL TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

U S Frigate *Constitution*
off Boston Light August 28th 1812

Sir,

I have the Honour to inform you that on the 19th inst. at 2 PM being in Lattitude 41°. 42° Longitude 55°. 48° with the wind from the Northward, and the *Constitution* under my command Steering to the S.SW. a sail was discovered from the Mast head bearing E by S. or E.SE. but at such a distance that we could not make out what she was. All sail was immediately made in chace, and we soon found we came fast up with the chace, so that at 3 PM. we could make her out to be a Ship on the Starboard tack close by the wind under easy sail. At 1/2 past 3 PM. closing very fast with the chace could see that she was a large Frigate, At 3/4 past 3 the chace backed her Maintopsail, and lay by on the Starboard tack; I immediately ordered the light sails taken in, and the Royal Yards sent down, took two reefs in the topsails, hauled up the foresail, and mainsail and see all clear for action, after all was clear the Ship was ordered to be kept away for the Enemy, on hearing of which the Gallant crew gave three cheers, and requested to be laid

Captain Isaac Hull,
U.S.S. Constitution

Captain James Dacres,
H.M.S. Guerriere

close alongside the chace. As we bore up she hoisted an English Ensign at the Mizen Gaff, another in the Mizen Shrouds, and a Jack at the Fore, and MizentopGallant mast heads. At 5 minutes past 5 PM. as we were running down on her weather quarter She fired a Broadside, but without effect the Shot all falling short, she then wore and gave us a broadside from Larboard Guns, two of which Shot Struck us but without doing any injury. At this time finding we were within gunshot, I ordered the Ensign hoisted at the Mizen Peak, and a Jack at the Fore and MizentopGallant mast head, and a Jack bent ready for hoisting at the Main, the Enemy continued wearing, and manœuvering for about 3/4 of an hour, to get the wind of us. At length finding that she could not, she bore up to bring the wind, on the quarter, and run under her Topsails, and Gib, finding that we came up very slow, and were receiving her shot without being able to return them with effect, I ordered the MaintopGallant sail set, to run up alongside of her.

At 5 minutes past 6 PM being alongside, and within less than Pistol Shot, we commenced a very heavy fire from all of our Guns, loaded with round, and grape, which done great Execution, so much so that in less than fifteen minutes from the time, we got alongside, his Mizen Mast went by the board, and his Main Yard in the Slings, and the Hull, and Sails very much injured, which made it very difficult for them to manage her. At this time the *Constitution* had received but little damage, and having more sail set than the Enemy she shot ahead, on seeing this I determined to put the Helm to Port, and oblige him to do the same, or suffer himself to be raked, by our getting across his Bows, on our Helm being put to Port the Ship came too, and gave us an opportunity of pouring in upon his Larboard Bow several Broadsides, which made great havock amongst his men on the forecastle and did great injury to his forerigging, and sails, The Enemy put his helm to Port, at the time we did, but his MizenMast being over the Quarter, prevented her coming too, which brought us across his Bows, with his Bowsprit over our Stern. At this moment I determined to board him, but the instant the Boarders were called, for that purpose, his Foremast, and Mainmast went by the board, and took with them the Gib-boom, and every other Spar except the Bowsprit. On seeing the Enemy totally disabled, and the *Constitution* received but little injury I ordered the Sails filled, to hawl off, and repair our damages and return again to renew the action, not knowing whither the Enemy had struck, or not, we stood off for about half an hour, to repair our Braces, and such other rigging, as had been shot away, and wore around to return to the Enemy, it being now dark, we could not see whether she had any colours, flying or not, but could discover that she had raised a small flag Staff or Jurymast forward. I ordered a Boat hoisted out, and sent Lieutenant Reed[1] on board as a flag[2] to see whether she had surrendered or not, and if she had to see what assistance she wanted, as I believed she was sinking. Lieutenant Reed returned in about twenty minutes, and brought with him, James Richard Dacres Esqr. Commander of his Britannic Majesty's Frigate the *Guerriere*, which ship had surrendered, to the United States Frigate *Constitution*, our Boats were immediately hoisted out and sent for the Prisoners, and were kept at work bringing them and their Baggage on board, all night. At daylight we found the Enemy's Ship a perfect Wreck, having many Shot holes between wind, and water, and above Six feet of the Plank below the Bends taken out by our round Shot, and her upperwork[s so] shattered to pieces, that I determined to take out the sick and wounded as fast as possible, and set her on fire, as it would be impossible to get her into Port.

At 3 PM. all the Prisoners being out, Mr Reed was ordered to set fire to her in the Store Rooms, which he did and in a very short time she blew up. I want words to convey to you the Bravery, and Gallant conduct, of the Officers, and the crew under by command during the action. I can therefore only assure you, that so well directed was the fire of the *Constitution*, and so closely kept up, that in less than thirty minutes, from the time we got alongside of the Enemy (One of their finest Frigates) She was left without a Spar Standing, and the Hull cut to pieces, in such a manner as to make it difficult to keep her above water, and the *Constitution* in a State to be brought into action in two hours. Actions like these speak for themselves which makes it unnecessary for me to say any thing to Establish the Bravery and Gallant conduct of those that were engaged in it, Yet I cannot but make you acquainted with the very great assistance I received from that valuable officer Lieutenant Morris[3] in bringing the Ship into action, and in working her whilst alongside the Enemy, and I am extremely sorry to state that he is badly wounded, being shot through the Body. we have yet hopes of his recovery, when I am sure, he will receive the thanks, and gratitude of his Country, for this and the many Gallant acts he has done in its Service.

Were I to name any particular Officer as having been more useful than the rest, I should do them great Injustice, they all fought bravely, and gave me every possible assistance, that I could wish. I am extremely sorry to state to you the loss of Lieutenant [William S.] Bush of Marines. He fell at the head of his men in getting ready to board the Enemy. In him our Country has lost a Valuable and Brave Officer. After the fall of Mr Bush, Mr [Lieutenant John] Contee took command of the Marines, and I have pleasure in saying that his conduct was that of a Brave good Officer, and the Marines behaved with great coolness, and courage during the action, and annoyed the Enemy very much whilst she was under our Stern.

Enclosed I have the Honour to forward you a list of Killed, and Wounded, on board the *Constitution*, and a list of Killed, and Wounded, on board the Enemy, with a List of her crew and a Copy of her Quarter Bill, also a report of the damage the *Constitution* received in the Action.[4] I have the honour to be [&c.]

Isaac Hull

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 207. This report, written on 28 Aug., was the first and most detailed report Hull wrote on this action, but he sent a shorter version, dated 30 Aug., to the secretary with a note stating that he had drafted a "short sketch" which the secretary might deem more worthy of publication. See Hull to Hamilton, 30 Aug. 1812, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 2, Nos. 219 and 220. The shorter version is the one commonly thought to be Hull's only report and was in fact the one published in John Brannan, *Official Letters of the Military Officers of the United States* . . . (Washington, D.C., 1823), pp. 49-52.

1. George C. Read, warranted midshipman on 2 Apr. 1804, promoted lieutenant on 25 Apr. 1810, attained rank of rear admiral, retired list, 30 July 1862, died 22 Aug. 1862.

2. "Flag": abbreviation for "flag of truce," individual carrying messages or sent on a special mission to visit an enemy unit.

3. Charles Morris, warranted midshipman on 1 July 1799, promoted lieutenant on 28 Jan. 1807 and captain on 5 Mar. 1813, by virtue of his performance of duty during the *Constitution-Guerriere* engagement. His rapid promotion ahead of other lieutenants and masters commandant drew criticism from his peers. See particularly the reaction of Master Commandant James Lawrence, pp. 519-20.

4. Enclosures not found.

Captain James R. Dacres, R.N., to Vice Admiral Herbert Sawyer, R.N.

Boston 7th September 1812

Sir,

I am sorry to inform you of the Capture of His Majesty's late Ship *Guerriere* by the American Frigate *Constitution* after a severe action on the 19th of August in Latitude 40.20 N and Longitude 55.00 West At 2 PM being by the Wind on the starboard Tack, we saw a Sail on our Weather Beam, bearing down on us. At 3 made her out to be a Man of War, beat to Quarters and prepar'd for Action. At 4, She closing fast wore to prevent her raking us. At 4.10 hoisted our Colours and fir'd several shot at her. At 4.20 She hoisted her Colours and return'd our fire. Wore several times, to avoid being raked, Exchanging broadsides. At 5 She clos'd on our Starboard Beam, both keeping up a heavy fire and steering free, his intention being evidently to cross our bow. At 5.20, our Mizen Mast went over the starboard quarter and brought the Ship up in the Wind. The Enemy then plac'd himself on our larboard Bow, raking us, a few only of our bow Guns bearing and his Grape and Riflemen sweeping our Deck. At 5.40 the Ship not answering her helm, he attempted to lay up on board at this time. Mr [Samuel] Grant who commanded the Forecastle was carried below badly wounded. I immediately order'd the Marines and Boarders from the Main Deck; the Master was at this time shot thro the knee, and I receiv'd a severe wound in the back. Lieutenant [Bartholomew] Kent was leading on the Boarders, when the Ship coming too, we brought some of our bow guns to bear on her and had got clear of our opponent when at 6.20 our Fore and Main Masts went over the side, leaving the Ship a perfect unmanageable Wreck. The Enemy shooting ahead, I was in hopes to clear the Wreck and get the Ship under Command to renew the Action but just as we had clear'd the Wreck our Spritsail yard went and the Enemy having rove new Braces &c, wore round within Pistol Shot to rake us, The Ship laying in the trough of the Sea and rolling her Main Deck Guns under Water and all attempts to get her before the Wind being fruitless, when calling my few remaining officers together, they were all of opinion that any further resistance would be a needless waste of lives, I order'd, though reluctantly, the Colours to be struck.

The loss of the Ship is to be ascribed to the early fall of the Mizen Mast which enabled our opponent to choose his position. I am sorry to say we suffered severely in killed and wounded and mostly whilst she lay on our Bow from her Grape and Musketry, in all 15 kill'd and 63 wounded, many of them severely; none of the wounded Officers quitted the Deck till the firing ceas'd.

The Frigate prov'd to be the United States Ship *Constitution*, of thirty 24 Pounders on her Main Deck and twenty four 32 Pounders and two 18 Pounders on her Upper Deck and 476 Men-her loss in comparison with ours was triffling, about twenty, the first Lieutenant of Marines and eight killed and first Lieutenant and Master of the Ship and eleven Men wounded, her lower Masts badly wounded; and stern much shattered and very much cut up about the Rigging.

The *Guerriere* was so cut up, that all attempts to get her in would have been useless. As soon as the wounded were got out of her, they set her on fire, and I feel it my duty to state that the conduct of Captain Hull and his Officers to our Men has been that of a brave Enemy, the greatest care being taken to prevent our Men losing the smallest trifle, and the greatest attention being paid to the wounded who through the attention and skill of Mr [John] Irvine, Surgeon, I hope will do well.

I hope though success has not crown'd our efforts, you will not think it presumptuous in me to say the greatest Credit is due to the Officers and Ship's Company for their exertions, particularly when exposed to the heavy raking fire of the Enemy. I feel particularly obliged for the exertions of Lieutenant Kent who though wounded early by a Splinter continued to assist me; in the second Lieutenant the Service has suffered a severe loss; Mr [Robert] Scott, the Master, though wounded was particularly attentive and used every exertion in clearing the Wreck as did the Warrant Officers. Lieutenant [William] Nicoll of the Royal Marines and his party supported the honorable Character of their Corps, and they suffer'd severely. I must particularly recommend Mr [William] Snow, Masters Mate, who commanded the foremost Main Deck guns in the absence of Lieutenant [John] Pullman and the whole after the fall of Lieutenant [Henry] Ready, to your protection, he having serv'd his time and received a severe contusion from a Splinter. I must point out Mr [John] Garby, Acting Purser, to your notice, who volunteer'd his Services on Deck, and commanded the after quarter Deck Guns and was particularly active as well as Mr [John W.] Bannister, Midshipman who has passed.

I hope, in considering the circumstances, you will think the Ship entrusted to my charge was properly defended; the unfortunate loss of our Masts, the absence of the third lieutenant, second Lieutenant of Marines, three Midshipmen, and twenty four Men considerably weakened our Crew, and we only muster'd at Quarters 244 Men and 19 Boys, on coming into action;[1] the Enemy had such an advantage from his Marines and Riflemen, when close and his superior sailing enabled him to choose his distance.[2]

I enclose herewith a List of killed and wounded on board the *Guerriere*[3] and have the Honor to be Sir, Your most obedient &c.

Sign'd J R Dacres

Vice Admiral Sawyer
Commander in Chief
&c &c &c Halifax

Copy, UkLPR, Adm. 1/502, Part 4, 541-45.

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[1] Of the 29 officers and men absent, 24 had been sent off as prize crews in various vessels captured by *Guerriere*.

[2] It should be noted that the sentiment of the British Navy, as expressed through the court martial of Captain Dacres at Halifax on 2 Oct. 1812, was sympathetic. Captain Dacres was acquitted of any improper conduct in surrendering his ship to the enemy. The Court stated that "the surrender of *La Guerriere* was proper, in order to preserve the lives of her valuable remaining crew; and that her being in that lamentable situation was from the accident of her masts going, which was occasioned more by their *defective state, than from the fire of the enemy,* though so greatly superior in guns and men." See *The Naval Chronicle* . . . 28: 422-24.

[3] Enclosure not found.

Constitution's Marines

Just as Captain Isaac Hull dispatched accounts of the Constitution-Guerriere *battle to Secretary Hamilton, so the commanding officer of a marine detachment was expected to send an after-action report to the commandant of marines. Lieutenant William S. Bush died in the engagement. In the official report, his successor, Lieutenant John Contee, gave a memorable description of the death of his leader. In the terse lines of the dispatch, one can sense the enthusiasm of a young officer as well as his awareness of the needs of his men.*

FIRST LIEUTENANT JOHN CONTEE, U.S.M.C., TO LIEUTENANT COLONEL COMMANDANT FRANKLIN WHARTON, U.S.M.C.

[Frigate *Constitution*][1]
[Boston, 31st Augt 1812]

Franklin Wharton Esq.

Sir

On the evening of the 19th in Latitude 41"30 N Longitude 55 W from Greenwich, we had an action with His Majesty's Frigate *Guerriere*, in which gloriously fell the Gallant Bush, who, mounting the Taffle,[2] sword in hand, and as he exclaimed! Shall I Board Her! received the fatal ball on the left cheek bone which passed thro' to the back of his head. Thus fell that brave and illustrious officer, who, when living, was beloved, and, now gone, is lamented by all. The conduct of the Detachment was highly honorable to themselves and their country; and the execution, they did, is allowed, by the officers of Both Ships, to have been of essential service. Francis Mullen, Stationed in the Mizen Top, was the only Marine wounded, and he slightly thro' the ancle, by a musket ball. The rest of the Guard in good health; all very much in want of clotheing. For the particulars of the action I refer you to Captn Hull's communication to the Secretary. I shall make every proper return as soon as possible. With Sentiments of the Highest Respect, I Remain, Sir [&c.]

John Contee
Lt. Marines Comdg

ALS, DNA, RG127, CMC, Letters Received.

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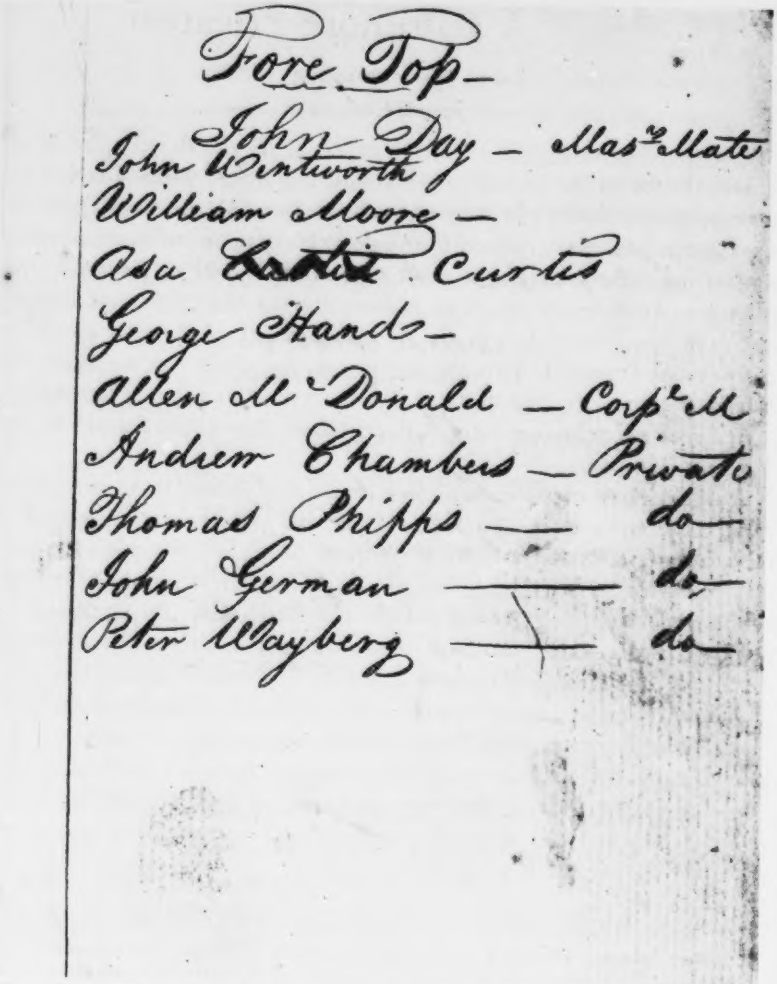
[1] John Contee, commissioned 2nd lieutenant on 17 Apr. 1812, was promoted 1st lieutenant on 24 July 1812.

[2] "Taffle": a phonetic spelling of taffrail, the curved wooden railing at the stern of a ship.



Fore Top–

John Day – Mas.r Mate

John Wentworth

William Moore –

Asa Curtis

George Hand –

Allen McDonald – Corp.l M

Andrew Chambers – Private

Thomas Phipps — do

John German —— do

Peter Wayberg — do

Page from U.S.S. *Constitution's* *Quarter Bill, showing the manning of the ship's foretop at battle stations.*

ELMIRA PUBLIC LIBRARY

Rossie: A Baltimore Privateer

Even before the War of 1812, the career of Joshua Barney had been a notable one in the annals of American seafaring.[1] *Barney served in merchantmen before the American Revolution, became an officer in the Continental Navy, served in the sloop* Hornet, *sailed in privateers, and escaped from confinement as a prisoner of war in England. He took a commission in the French Navy during the 1790s and owned shares in two French privateers. At the outbreak of the War of 1812, Barney was anxious to join the war at sea, but there was no place for him in the navy. In Baltimore, however, several merchants purchased a five-year-old schooner named* Rossie, *and they asked Barney to be her captain.*

On 11 July, Barney departed on a cruise that proved to be one of the most remarkable in the history of American privateering. During the next six weeks, Rossie *captured eighteen vessels off Nova Scotia and Newfoundland. He put into Newport on 30 August, resupplied the ship and departed again, cruising toward the Caribbean. By 22 October, when he returned to Baltimore, Barney had taken a total of 3,698 tons of British shipping worth about a million and a half dollars and 217 prisoners.*[2] Rossie *was afterward converted into a letter-of-marque trader, and Barney retired from privateering, hoping to receive a navy commission. The document which follows is Barney's journal of the events in the first part of his cruise in* Rossie. *A large portion has been selected because it is so representative of the routine of a successful privateer during the War of 1812.*

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[1] *See Ralph D. Paine's* Joshua Barney: A Forgotten Hero of Blue Water *(New York, 1924), and Hulbert Footner's* Sailor of Fortune: The Life and Adventures of Commodore Barney, U.S.N. *(New York, 1940).*

[2] *Garitee,* The Republic's Private Navy, *pp. 152-54.*

"JOURNAL OF A CRUIZE ON BOARD THE SCHOONER *ROSSIE*"

[Extract]

Saturday July 11th 1812 At 11 a m got under way & beat from the Point to Fort M Henry & anchored

Sunday 12th At Meridean I went on board, called all hands, mustered the crew, found every person on board, except Mr Saml Poe Prize Master & three hands, Appointed Mr Christopher Deshon Agent for Prizes, at 2 P.M. got under way, at 7 PM anchored below North Point, near the Man of War Shoals, saw coming down the River, the Privateers *Nonsuch*, *Comet*, *High-flier*, & *Eagle* who anchored to the N.West of us

Monday 13th At 5 a m got under way, the above Privateers & several other sail in Company, Wind S.E. ahead of the Fleet. at 8 PM abreast of the High land, off Patuxant, hove too, & spoke the *Nonsuch* the other Privateers some distance a stern, continued beating down the Bay. light winds

Tuesday 14th July at Day light abreast of Point Look out, the *Nonsuch* near us, & the *High flyer* about Six Miles ahead. continued beating down the Bay, found that we gained on the *High flyer* but the *Nonsuch* kept way with us. Ran four of our Guns forward, where we immediately left the *Nonsuch* & in three hours was 1 1/2 miles to windward of her at 7 P.M. weathered the *High flyer* at 10 P.M. anchored under New Point Comfort.

Wednesday 15th at 5 a.m. got under way. wind S.W. in company with the *Nonsuch*. left the *High-flyer* at anchor, stood towards the Capes, at 8 a.m. discharged our Pilot, then a considerable distance a head of the *Nonsuch*, no other Privateer in sight, saw several vessels coming out of Hampton, at 9 abreast of Cape Henry at 10 Cape Henry W by S 6 miles, at meridian Latt 37.4

Thursday 16th July Spoke a schooner out of Hampton Roads bound to Philadelphia. informed us that a Schooner the day before had arrived from Phld who saw Five men of war off Cape May, supposed them British Exercised our Guns, & prepared every thing on board for action, when necessary Light winds from South to North, Easterly Latt Obs 37.30 Nth Long 73.22

Friday 17th Begins with fresh Breezes from the NE and a cross Sea, the Prize Masters drew lots, Mr Harris No 1, Mr Stubbs No 2, Mr Chittenden No 3, Mr Scott No 4, Mr Worthington No 5, Mr Coale No 6, Mr Jenkins No 7 At 6 a.m. Saw a sail, tacked Ship, at 9 spoke her, The *Electra*, Capt Williams, from Lisbon to Philadelphia. 48 days out, had spoke the British Sloop of War *Morgana* off the Western Isles, no news of the war. I advised her pushing for the Chesapeake Bay. fresh winds from the E.N.E. No observation Longt DR 71.20. . .

Wednesday 22d At 2 P.M. came up with the chase a Brig from Martinique bound to Newbury Port The *Nymph* Capt Patch being loaded with molasses. finding the Governers Pass from Martinique loaded with the produce of that Island. I made a Seizure, under the Non Importation Law, mann'd her & sent her for a Port in the U.S. gave chase to a Brig & a Ship. at 5 came up with the Brig (American) from [St Ubes] for New London continued in chase of the Ship Rain & squalls, lost sight at 7 P.M. tack'd to the North under an Idea that the ship had done so at 10 P.M. saw her ahead, at 11 boarded her, she was from Martinique, but hailed from Porto Rico, took the Capt & People on board, examined the Papers, found every thing to satisfy my self of her being subject to the Non Importation Law but did not find her pass her Spanish Passes were all forged at Martinque, at 4 a m sent the Capt & crew on board & discharged them The Ship is called the *Reserve* belongs to Mr King of Bath, Capt Prior light winds, saw a ship to the westwd Latt 40.16 No Longt 62.50 W

Thursday July 25th 1812 first & middle part light winds from the Easwd & pleasant, at 8 a m saw a Sail in the North Et stood for her, at 9 perceived she was in chase of us, tacked ship to the Southd gained to windward of her, at 10 tacked to N.E. and discovered her to be a Frigate of the first rate, on passing to windward of her, she began firing at us. without shewing any colours, she tack'd. as she tack'd we tack'd also on the contrary way, She then hoisted American Colours & continued to fire at us. we

Provisions expended	
Beef	807 lbs
Bread	1154 lbs
Pork	460 "
Flour	156 "
Peas	29 Gall
Rum	36 do
Officers	
Beef	120 lbs
Pork	120 "

Peas	10 Gall
Rice	40 lbs
Water	840 Gll

hoisted American Colours & fired a Gun to Leeward, we made several Tacks & gain'd considerably to windward, she continued her Fire untill she had fired 25 Guns, & then made several private signals Latt 40.6 No Longt 62.0

Friday 24th The Frigate continued in chase. but dropping to Leeward, at 3 P.M. the Frigate fired a Gun to Leeward & gave over chase, having carried away her flying Gibb Boom, we then tack'd to the Easwd at half past 3 saw a Sail a head, under Jury Masts standing to the WNW at 5 the Frigate spoke her, under English Colours, at 6 P.M. the Frigate bore NW & BW distant 8 miles so that in 8 hours we had got round to the Eeaswd of a Frigate that bore N.E. in the morning, & had got to windward of her 8 miles after being nearly within Gunshot at 1/2 past 7 P M lost sight of the Frigate, we carried Sail all night to the E.N.E. (I am in doubt respecting the Frigate being American or English) fresh winds from S.S.E. Latt 41.41 No Longt 59.30 Wt . . .

Supposed to be the same Frigate we saw on the 24th Inst

Thursday 30th First & middle Part fresh breezes from the N.N.W. to North & N.N.E.-thick weather at midnight sounded, got Bottom on the Grand Bank in 47 Fathom water, at 5 a.m. discovered a Sail to the S.E. gave chase. soon perceived she was a Cruizer. at 7 discover'd that she was a Frigate we made private signal & fired 2 Guns, she hoisted a signal, fired a Gun to Leeward & shew American Colours. We bore down to windward of her, she did not answer my signal. at 8 A.M. made Sail to the Eastwd wind at N.N.E. The Frigate gave over chase, & stood about E.S.E. at Meridian she bore SSW 3 Leagues thick weather 45 Fathom Water No Observation Longt 51.5 Wt

Friday July 31st Light winds from the N.N.E. at 3 P.M. saw a sail to the Eastwd standing W.b N. gave chase at 5 spoke her, an English Ship from Belfast to St Andrews. in Ballast. sent on board her & took possession, found her of little value, took Sundry articles

2 Barrells Pork
4 Casks water
1 Firkin Butter
600 lb Bread

3 Coils Rigging
1000 lb Sheet Lead
2 Boxes Candles
A number of small stores
Compasses, canvass, Twine, housing, ec.

for use of the Schooner & set her on Fire. at 7 saw a sail to the Eastwd after firing the ship. we stood to the N.W. in order to bring the other sail under our Lee by morning, all night light airs, continued in sight of the Ship on Fire, at 9 PM saw the flash of Guns in the E.S.E. at day light discover'd the sail we saw last night, bearing South. appeared a large Ship with all Sail set. standing to the Westwd gave chase all sail set, at 6 perceived she had painted sides & a Tier of Ports (20) got every thing ready for action & stood down on her quarter. at 7 came along side, she hoisted English colours, we hoisted American Flag, & ordered her to strike her colours which she instantly did. was from Grenock to St Andrews in Ballast, being a fine ship, I mann'd her, sending on board Mr Jas Stubbs & 6 hands leaving 4 hands of the Ship on board, & 1 hand from the Ship I had burnt, & ordered her into the first Port in the United States. she is called the *Kitty* of 305 Tons, Daniel Thompson Master The Ship Burnt was call'd the *Princess Royal* 189 Ton Saml Heath Master, at 9 left the Prize & stood to the N.N.E. No Observation

Saturday 1st August 1812. Light airs. standing to the Eastwd at 6 P.M. Stood N.E. light winds, at 8 a m discover'd a Sail to the Northwd at 9 saw two other sail to the N.E. at meridian came up with the Chase, a Brig out of St Johns Newfoundland loaded with Cod Fish 18,000, having a number of Prisoners was anxious to get rid of them, sent the two Mates of the Ship *Kitty*, & *Princess Royal*, on board with 6 of their hands with orders to follow us, & to send the Capt of the Brig on board, which they did. we then gave chase to the two others found her to be the Brig *Brothers* of St Johns Richd Penny Master & 9 men cargo as above Latt Obv 45.20 Nth The 4 following men entd this day Js Osson, Joseph Francisco, John Stickman, & Andrew Wineberg

Provisions Expended

Bread 1718 wt Beef 1279 lb Pork 693 lb Flour

230 wt Peas 43 1/2 Gallns Rum 51 Gallns exclusive of officers water 1600 Gallons

Sunday 2d Augt A fine breeze from the Southwd, at 3 P.M. came up with the Chase another Brig withe Cod-Fish put on board her the Capt of the Prize Ship *Princess Royal* & 4 of his men, with orders to follow us & to send the Capt on board, which was done. she is the Brig *Fame* of Exeter England, Wm Standard Master with 18,000 Cod Fish at-3 continued our chase after the other who had haul'd her wind to the Easwd at 4 discoverd a Schooner at Anchor fishing, at 6 P.M. got near enough the Brig to fire a shot at her, She hove too, we sent a boat on board, with orders to set her on Fire, & immediately bore down on the Schooner Sent our other boat on board with orders to send the prisoners on board, & to set her on Fire also, at 7 P.M. both vessels were in a Blaze The one, the Brig *Devonshire* of Exeter, the other the Schr *Squid* also of Exeter. the Brig had 21,000 fish, and the Schr 18,000 with 21 Prisoners. at 8 P.M. bore away after our two other Prizes, at 1/2 past 11 fell in with them, sent an officer & men on board the Brig *Devonshire* & set her on fire; we then put on board the Brig *Brothers* all our Prisoners consisting of 6 Masters, 6 Mates & 50 Men; tot [*took*] a Receipt from the Captains, that they acknowledged themselves Prisoners of War to the U.S. & that they would not serve against us untill regularly exchanged they & their crews: at 2 a.m. parted with them & stood to the Eastwd at 8 a.m. Saw a sail to the North. gave chase. soon after discover'd 4 more. continued our chase with light airs to the Southwd Latt Obs. 46.28 No Longt 50.10

Monday Aug 3d 1812 at 2 P.M. came up with a Schooner, sent the boat on board & ran down to Leeward to a Brig, our Boat took possession of the Schr and brought her down to us. She was a Fisherman with Fish call'd the *Race Horse*, Capt John Mudge 8,000 fish the Brig was the *Henry*, Capt Wm Halling both from St Johns, we took out the Crews & scuttled them & gave chase to the others which were to th E.N.E. of us. we saw three sail ahead & a schoone to windward-at 6 came up with the Brig *William* Capt Richd Holeman from Bristol to St Johns. hoiste out our boat & took possession of her at the sam time sent our other boat on board a Schr to windwd which was the *Hallifax* Capt Patrick Power with Fish Mann'd the Brig *William* & ordered her to the U.S. after having put on board Mr Nathl Chittenden as Prize Master. She had a Cargo of Coal, Beef, Cheese, Boots, Shoes, & Sundry articles at 7 PM sent our boat on board another Schooner, & took possession of her, loaded with fish call'd the *Brothers*, Capt. John Mathison, having then Forty Prisoners on board. I ordered the Schr *Hallifax* to be burnt, & put all the Prisoners on board the *Brothers*, taking a Receipt & sent them to St Johns to be exchanged for americans; during the last two days we have taken, burnt, & destroy'd nine sail, and 156 Prisoners. at 8 PM made sail to the Eastward. we were inform'd that a Frigate was off this place Yesterday Information from Capt Holeman that he fell in with the Homeward Jamaica Fleet-in number 91, all well, near the Coast of Europe, that the Orders of Council was off as respected the US & no expectation of a War in England at 8 P.M. made sail to the Eastward, thick fogg-fresh breeze from the Southwd find by observation that a strong current sets to Northward Latt Obs 46.46 No Longt 48.10. . .

Saturday Augt 8th Light winds from the N.N.W. standing to the N.E.-at 7 A.M. saw a Sail ahead of us at 8 She tack'd to the N.E. stood to the Westwd 1/2 an hour to observe her movements, as she appeared a large Ship at 9 tack'd & gave chase, gained on her fast. Water 1960 Gal Latt obs 44.26 No

Provisions Expd
Bread 2198 lbs
Beef 1693
Pork 897
Flour 302
Peas 56 glls
Rum 66 do
Officers not countd

Sunday Augt 9 Continued in Chase, (a large Ship appearing to be armed) at 2 got to windwd of her, perceived she had a Tier of Guns, prepared for Action & bore down, She hoisted English Colours, we did so likewise at 3 P.M. came upon her quarter saw that she was prepared to receive us, bore up across her stern, hoisted American colours, & began a well directed Fire from Great Guns & small arms, which was returned from the Enemy, we then hauled up directly under her Stern, with intent to run her along Side. on their perceiving our intentions, Struck their Colours, we rec'd no damage: the Enemy was much Cut in her Hull & Rigging, proved to be the Ship *Jeanie* from Liverpool to Newfoundland 450 Tons burthen mounting 6 Twelve pounders & 6 long sixes, & 20 men; with 18000 bushells Salt on board. Mann'd her by sending Mr Scott and 7 men & 5 prisoners in her, order'd her to the U.S. got out 400 Gallns Water. at 7 P.M. made sail, wind very light from the N.W. stood to the Westwd in company with the Prize all night light winds-at 7 fresh breeze & squally, Ship in company, wind S.W. standing to the W.N.W. at 10 tack'd to the Southwd as did the prize Latt Obs 44.24 no Longt 49.10 wt

Monday Augt 10th at meridian saw a sail in the S.S.E. at 2 P.M. bore down upon her, & spoke her. Brig *Rebecca*, Capt Abbott, from London, bound to Boston finding her lading to consist of British Goods & a British Licence on board made Seizure of her under the Non-Importation Law & ordered her to the U.S. was informed that she had been in a convoy this morning at 4 oclock from Jamaica of 51 Sail under the convoy of a 64 Gun Ship, 5 Frigates, & some smaller that he had on board the Capt & Crew of a New York Ship, which had been taken by the *Guerrier* & put on Parole, that they (the British) had two fine American Ships in company as prizes, & that they had captured and destroy'd about 21 American Vessels since the War began, all these Ships of War belonged to the Halifax Station & were cruizing when they fell in with the Jamaica Fleet but finding the convoy very weak (one Frigate only) they were escorting

Put on board
Rebecca
1 hhd Water
1 Bll beef
1 Bag Bread

The U.S. brig *Nautilus* was taken by the *Belvidere* The Crew on board the *Africa* 64-The *Essex* had captured an English Transport with

300 Soldiers bound to Quebec, had paroled them, & sent them to Halifax.

them to the Eastwd They inform'd the Capt that they had fallen in with the *Constitution* frigate, but she had escaped them, & gave much credit to Capt Hull for his conduct They also mentioned having recaptured a Brig which had been taken by *Essex* & that the *Essex* was cruising on the Bay of Newfoundland They had in consequence of the British Licence set the above Brig at liberty & she was proceeding for Boston Put Mr Worthington on board & stood to the Northwd middle & latter part cloudy & squally Latt 45.11 No. . .

Friday Augt 14 at 2 P.M. spoke the Chase, the Brig *Hazard*, Capt Luce from Cadiz bound to Boston, Cargo of Salt, was inform'd she had seen a Privateer Schooner on the 10th blowing a Gale-he could not board her, but inform'd that he was out of Rhode Island: last evening was chased by a Frigate who fired a Gun at him about dark, but coming thick weather he lost sight of her & that he saw a Brig in the night, standing to the N.E.-put the Capt of the Boston Brig we had seized on board this vessel & dismissed her-light winds from the Northwd Latt Obsd 40.16 No

Saturday Augt 15th 1812 Fresh breezes from the N.E. standing to the N.W. cloudy weather, anxious to see our Prizes, which we left to the Northwd in the last Gale-at 11 a.m. saw a Sail in the N.E. stood for her, she was steering to the N.W.-came up with her very fast Latt Obsd 42.4 No

Sunday 16th Augt at 2 PM perceived she had Ports, got to Quarters stood for her, under English Colours, she hoisted american colours, & then haul'd them down again prepared for action, the Chase shewing 16 guns, at 1/2 past 2, ran along side of her, changed our colours. she again shew American Colours, & hailed from Gibraltar to Boston. sent our Boat on board for the Capt Examined his Papers & dismiss'd him-Put on board on Parole Capt Stewart of the *Jeannie* & John Russel one of his apprentices. at 3 P.M. made sail to the Northwd-Oliver Silvador & John Martin

Prisoners of the *Jeannie* entered At 10 P.M. stood to the westwd under easy sail, a heavy Sea rolling at 8 a.m. saw a sail to the Southwd thick fog. made sail, & tack'd to the Eastwd after her, at 10 lost sight. continued to Steer to the East, where we saw her last, very thick fog & fine rain. No Observation

Monday Augt 17 Thick fog. continued to steer to fall in with the chase, but in vain, we find nothing but Gales, thick fogs, & cross heavy Seas, which makes unsafe & very unpleasant cruizing, Steered to the Northwd untill midnight. then stood to the Southwd-At 5 a m discovered a Sail in the S.S.E. gave chase. at 7 spoke her. The Brig *Favorite*, Capt Sears from Cadiz bound to Boston, Cargo Salt & 11 Bales cloth. inform'd him of the War. dismiss'd him & made sail to the Southwd Fresh Gales & cloudy Latt Obs 42.49 No

Tuesday Augt 18th Strong Gale & heavy sea with rain. standing to the S.S.W. wind from the N.N.W.-wishing to get into more moderate at 6 PM set the Fore & main try Sails & hove too, head to the SW lay all night-at 4 A.M. more moderate made sail to the SW. at meridian fine weather Employed in drying small Sails, cleansing between decks & putting ship in order, every thing suffered very much from the late bad weather. Latt Obs 41.13 No

Wednesday 19th Moderate & pleasant with light winds from the Westwd standing to the Southwd my intention to proceed to Latt 39 Noh in hopes of falling in with the July Jamaica Fleet, which must soon be on this way Latt Obsd 40.36 No

Thursday 20th At 1 PM saw a sail in the S.S.W. & gave chase. at 4 spoke her, the Brig *John Adams* from Liverpool to New York Capt Foath she had been captured two days ago by the Frigate *Guerrier* part of her Cargo had been taken out, the Brig given up, and the Crew of an American Schooner from Naples put on board, which crew & that of the *John Adams* were put upon Parole, with several Women & Children Passengers finding the Brig in bad order, having lost her main

Top mast, with Salt & Coal & a few Crates of Earthen-ware left in her I did not make a Seizure of her under the Non Importation Law, but suffered her to proceed The Capt informed me, that he was told on board the *Guerrier* that the British had taken & destroyed on this Coast, upwards of 170 American vessels since the War commenced, he supposed that the *Guerrier* was not more than 15 Leagues to the Eastwd of us: this is the Second time I have found myself a few miles distance from this ship: fresh Gale from the N.N.E. at 6 P.M. bore away to the S.W. under easy sail, at 8 A M hauled up to the Westwd- pleasant weather Latt Obs 39.3 North . . .

Monday Augt 24th 1812 Winds variable. four sail in sight. took one for a Frigate made several Tacks to try her-at 1/2 past meridian she made sail to the westwd we then stood for the ship we had been chase of, At 1 PM came up with her; she proved to be the American Ship *Euphrates*, of New Bedford, Capt DeCost from Liverpool to New York, Lading, Dry Goods &c, with 18 Passingers-I took the Capt on board & examined him: we being under English Colours he informd me he had a British Licence, made a Seizure of the Ship & Cargo under the Non Importation Law, & put Mr Coale on board, with orders to proceed for the nearest Port in the U.S.-at 2 P.M. made sail in chase of another sail to the westwd blowing very heavy from the Northwd with squalls, carried a press of sail & shippd much water; at 10 P.M. came up with the chase, proved to be the *Rebecca* which I had seized a few days ago. The prize master inform'd me that he had been that morning on board the *Constitution* Frigate, Capt Hull where he saw the officer & crew of the British Frigate *Guerriere* which they had captured on the 20th after a short engagement of Fifteen minutes, the *Guerriere* having been totally dismasted, & the Capt wounded that they had burnt the *Guerriere* & was proceeding to Boston to refit, having had some of her masts injured by shot. Gave the *Rebecca* a Barrel of Pork & 2 Barrels of Bread-stood to the westwd under easy sail-at 6 a m The *Euphrates* was near us, & the *Rebecca* a few miles to the westwd-spoke the *Euphrates*, gave them the news, & recommended pushing into the nearest Port My intention is to see those two valuable Prizes (£ 250,000 STG) in Safety, if Possible-light winds. Latt Obs 41.12 No . . .

Friday Augt 28th Begins with calm. afterwards light breezes from the N.E. middle & latter part at 6 a.m. got soundings on George's Bank in 48 Fathoms water & Saw 2 Sail to the Southwd & S.E. gave chase. at 9 came up with a Brig, she proved to be a prize, (loaded with Spars) to the Privateer *Benjamin Franklin* out of Philadelphia. the other sail was a Schooner, but she had run out of sight whilst we were chasing the Brig. at 9 made sail to join our two Prizes, which were then out of sight to the westwd. at 10 saw them. at meridian a fresh breeze 58 Fathom water. Latt Obsd 40.31 north.

Saturday Augt 29th Light winds from the N.W. standing in on the Bank near the South shoals of Nantucket. at 4 am tack'd to the Northwd at 5 am saw a sail gave chase; at 7 spoke her, the Ship *Jewel*, Robinson, from the Isle of May bound to Portland gave her information of the War-Our two Prizes in Company Latt Obsd 40.35 north

Sunday 30th Throughout light winds from the W.S.W. at 6 A.M. saw a sail. at 8 in 20 fathom water standing to the N.W. At meridian saw the Land off Martha's Vineyard bearing N.B.E. distant 9 miles, Our two Prizes in sight. Latt Obs 41.11 north

Monday Augt 30th Winds from the W.S.W. a sail to windwd of us. at 1 P.M. spoke her, the Schr *Mary Ann* from Cadiz to New London, our prizes astern, stood to them & spoke them, ordered the Brig to follow me into New Port & then tack'd for the Land, at 6 A.M. got to within No Mans Land. the Prize Ship in Company. under sail all night in the Sound at Day light; sent my boat & six men on board the Ship, & ordered her into New Port took a Pilot & bore away in the offing in order to fall in with our Brig (Prize) could not see her,

> & stood for New Port. At 7 A.M. saw the Brig to the S.E. at 8 was near the light at the Entrance of the Harbour, the Ship in Company. At 10 came to anchor at New Port, & fired a Salute of 11 Guns–we have been Forty Five days Effective on this part of our Cruize, there remains Forty four days to complete the Cruize, according to articles. . .
>
> Joshua Barney

District and Port of Newport Septem 2d 1812 I Joshua Barney Commander of the private armed Schooner *Rossie* do swear that what is contained in the above and foregoing Journal consisting of twenty-one pages is just and true in all its parts So help me God

Joshua Barney

Collr Office Port of Newport
Sworn to the day & year above mentioned
Wm Ellery Collr

DS, U.S. Naval Academy Museum, Annapolis, Md., Manuscript Collection; from a copy provided by the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum, St. Michaels, Md., where the Naval Academy's original was on loan during the spring of 1981.

The Missing Husband

The urgent need for men frequently drove recruiting officers to extreme measures for gaining enlistments. The following letter discloses the plight of a woman whose husband apparently agreed to serve in the Marine Corps when he was less than sober. Although her complaint is one which has probably been uttered countless times through the ages, it is rare to find a document that so clearly states the case.

PETITION OF JANE STINGER TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

The Petition of Jane Stinger

respectfully sheweth;

That on the 25th instant, the husband of your Petitioner Daniel Stinger, a Baker by trade, enlisted in the City of Philadelphia, as a Marine in the service of the United States. that at the time he enlisted he was so much under the influence of liquor as to be incapable of knowing what he did. that the enlisting officer took advantage of his intoxication when he persuaded him to enlist and that he had not recovered from the effects of the liquor when he took the Oath before the magistrate. That your Petitioner by the enlistment of her husband is left with two small children without possessing means to provide for their support and maintenance, and that her distress is greatly increased by reason of expences lately incurred by a severe illness from which her husband has been but recently recovered. That your Petitioner will willingly sacrifice a part of her furniture with with to procure the means of providing a substitute in the place of her husband. Your Petitioner therefore respectfully requests you will be pleased to direct the commanding officer on the station to discharge her Husband from the term of his enlistment upon her procuring a substitute in his place. And your Petitioner as in duty bound will ever pray.

Jane Stinger

Philadelphia August 31 1812.

We the Subscribers do Certify to the Honourable the Secretary of the Navy that he will greatly relieve a distressed Family by complying with the request of the Petitioner.

John Barker
John Dennis
Tench Coxe

DS, DNA, RG45, MLR, 1812, Vol. 6, No. 68.

The Return of Rodgers' Squadron

On 21 June, the ships of the combined squadrons of Commodores Rodgers and Decatur weighed anchor at Sandy Hook and soon found themselves in chase of H.M.S. Belvidera, *but failed to overtake her. Afterwards, Rodgers expended much time and effort in search of a homeward-bound British West Indian convoy. Hampered by poor visibility for most of the cruise, the squadron captured only seven vessels. Despite the lack of numerous captures, Rodgers's cruise did accomplish a strategic objective: Commodore Broke's squadron remained in existence during July, in order to protect British convoys from the threat posed by Rodgers' squadron.*[1] *In so doing, Broke withheld frigates that might have been assigned to blockade Boston and other eastern ports. In the meantime, many merchant ships, which had sailed from American ports before the 4 April embargo, were able to return safely. The effect of Rodgers's concentration of force did not last so long as it might have, however. Learning that the American warships had sailed far to the east, Commodore Broke dispersed his ships in early August. Thus,* Guerriere *was headed toward Halifax for refitting when intercepted by* Constitution, *and other British frigates returned to take station off New York.*

[1] *In the view of Mahan,* Sea Power in its Relations to the War of 1812, *I: 320–27, Commodore Rodgers' strategy was an effective way to use a small naval force. For another view, suggesting that more prizes might have been taken and British frigates defeated had U.S. ships sailed singly, as the feats of Hull and Porter suggest, see Maloney, "The War of 1812," in Hagen, ed.* In Peace and War, *pp. 46–62.*

COMMODORE JOHN RODGERS TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

U.S. Frigate *President*
Boston September 1st 1812

Sir,

I had the honor yesterday of informing you of the arrival of the Squadron, and now to state the result and particulars of our cruise.

Previous to leaving New York on the 21st of June I heard that a British Convoy had sailed from Jamaica for England on or about the 20th of the preceding month, and on being informed of the decleration of

War against Great Britain I determined in the event of Commor Decaturs joining me with the *U. States*, *Congress* and *Argus*, as you had directed, to go in pursuit of them.

The *United States*, *Congress* and *Argus* did join me on the 21st with which vessels, this Ship and the *Hornet* I accordingly sailed, in less than an hour after I received your orders, of the 18th of June, accompanied by your official communication of the Declaration of War.

On leaving New York I shaped our course South Easterly, in the expectation of falling in with Vessels by which I should hear of the before mentioned Convoy, and the following night met with an American Brig that gave me the sought for information: The Squadron now crouded Sail in pursuit; but the next morning was taken out of its course by the pursuit of a British Frigate, that I since find was the *Belvidera*, relative to which I beg leave to refer you to the inclosed extract from my journal:[1] after repairing as far as possible the injury done by the *Belvidera* to our spars and rigging we again crowded all sail and reassumed our course in pursuit of the Convoy, but did not receive further intelligence of it until the 29th of June, on the western edge of the Banks of Newfoundland, where we spoke an American Schooner, the Master of which reported that he had, two days before, passed them in Latd 43°, Longd 55°, steering to the Eastward: I was surprised to find that the Convoy was still so far to the Eastward of us, but was urged however, as well by what I considered my duty, as by inclination, to continue the pursuit.

On the 1st of July, a little to the Eastward of Newfoundland Bank, we fell in with quantities of Cocoa Nut Shells, Orange peels &c &c. which indicated that the Convoy were not far distant and we pursued it with zeal, altho frequently taken out of our course by vessels it was necessary to chase, without gaining any further intelligence until the 9th of July, in Latd 48°30′, Longd 23, we captured the British, private, armed brig *Dolphin*, of Jersey, and was informed by some of her Crew that they had seen the Convoy the preceeding evening, the weather was not clear at the time, but that they had counted 85 sail, and that the force, charged with its protection, consisted of one two decker, a Frigate, a sloop of War, and a Brig.

This was the last intelligence I received of the before mentioned Convoy, altho' its pursuit was continued until the 13th of July, being then within 18 or 20 hours sail of the British Channel.

From this we steered for the Island of Madeira, passed close by it on the 21st of July: thence near the Azores and saw Corvo and

Flores: thence steered for the Banks of Newfoundland, and from the latter place (by the way of Cape Sable) to this Port, it having become indispensibly necessary (by the time we reached our own coast) to make the first convenient Port in the United States: owing I am sorry to say to that wretched disease the scurvey, having made its appearance on board of the vessels, most generally to a degree seriously alarming.

From the western part of the Banks of Newfoundland to our making the Island of Madeira the weather was such, at least 6 days out of 7, as to obscure, from our discovery, every object that we did not pass within 4 or 5 miles of, and indeed for several days together the fog was so thick as to prevent our seeing each other, even at a cable's length assunder, more than twice or thrice in 24 hours.

From the time of our leaving the United States until our arrival here we chased every Vessel we saw, and you will not be a little astonished when I inform you that, although we brought too every thing we did chase, with the exception of four vessels, we only made seven Captures & one recapture.

It is truly an unpleasant task to be obliged to make a communication thus barren of benefit to our country: the only consolation I individually feel on the occasion being derived from knowing that our being at Sea obliged the Enemy to concentrate a considerable portion of his most active force and thereby prevented his capturing an incalculable amount of American property that would otherwise have fallen a sacrifice.

I am aware of the anxiety you must have experienced at not hearing from me for such a length of time, but this I am sure you will not attribute in any degree to neglect, when I inform you that not a single proper opportunity occured, from the time of leaving the the United States until our return.

Mr Newcomb,[2] who will deliver you this, you will find an intelligent young man, capable of giving such further information as you may deem of any moment: He will at the same time deliver you a Chart, shewing the Tract in which we cruised: annexed is a list of Vessels Captured, recaptured, and Burnt.

The four vessels that we chased and did not come up with was, the *Belvidera* a Small pilot boat Schooner supposed to be an American Privateer, the Hermaphrodite Privateer Brig *Yankee*,[3] which we lost sight of in a fog, but whose character we afterwards learnt, and a Frigate, supposed to be British, that we chased on the 28th Ult near the Shoal of George's Bank, and should certainly have come up with, had we have had the advantage of two hours more day light.

On board of the several vessels of the Squadron there are between 80 & 100 Prisoners, taken from the vessels we captured during our late cruise: The Government not having any agent for prisoners here, I shall send them to Commor Bainbridge, to be disposed of in such a manner as best appears with the interest of the United States, and which I hope may meet your approbation. With the greatest respect [&c.]

Jn^{o} Rodgers

DS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 2.

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1. See pp. 154-57.
2. Midshipman Walter Newcomb.
3. *Yankee*, 14, Captain Oliver Wilson, out of Rhode Island.

[Enclosure]

July 2nd	Brig *Traveller*	277 tons. James Amerry Master, of Newcastle, 10 men, bound from the Bay of Fundy to Newcastle, Eng. owned by George Dunn, John Watson, Matth Dunn & John Stoker, cargo Timber. Burnt.
July 4th	Brig *Dutchess of Portland*.	6 guns & 11 men, of Newcastle Engd. bound from Newcastle to Nova Scotia in Ballast. Burnt.
July 9th	Brig *Dolphin*	241 tons, 12 guns & 23 men. Philip Cabbot Master of Jersey [England] bound from Jersey to Newfoundland in ballast & some cargo owned by Winter & Nicoll. sent into the U. States
July 24th	Ship *John* of	Lancaster, 16 guns & 30 men bound from London to Martinique in ballast. sent into the U. States
August 2nd	Brig *Argo*,	168 tons, 10 guns & 10 men. William Middleton Master, of London bound from Pernambucco to London, laden with Cotton, fustic & about $8000 in Gold. ordered for the U. States

August 17th	Schr *Adeline*	of London, 10 Men, bound from Hayti to London, laden with Coffee. ordered for the U. States
August 25th	Schr *Betsey*	of Marblehead, from Naples, laden with Brandy, recaptured from the *Gurrierre*, who had ordered her for Halifax, 4 men & a Midshipman (prize master). ordered her for the U. States

Jn^{o} Rodgers

DS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 2.

Chapter Three

The Northern Lakes Theater: June–December 1812

Although Canada loomed large among the military objectives of the Madison administration at the beginning of the War of 1812, nothing had been done to prepare naval forces for action on the borders of the United States and Canada. From Lakes Superior and Huron to Erie and Ontario, the United States possessed but one commissioned warship, the 16-gun brig, Oneida, *based at Sackets Harbor, New York. Farther east, Lake Champlain held a position that was exceedingly important from a strategic perspective. No land campaign around or beyond these lakes could succeed without first achieving naval superiority. Without population centers or local industries that could support an extensive campaign, invasion forces lacking command of the lakes would find their communications and supply lines severed. For both the United States and Great Britain, the logistical side of the lakes campaigns posed an unending series of problems.*

Initial British victories and resistance all along the Canadian frontier blighted American dreams of an easy conquest of the lakes and control of the St. Lawrence River. The American Generals Hull, Van Rensselaer, and Dearborn attacked the British and their Indian allies at Detroit, Niagara, and Montreal, respectively, during the summer and autumn of 1812. Hull and his army were captured, Van Rensselaer was defeated after some gains, and Dearborn returned to winter quarters at Plattsburg after desultory skirmishes. In the 1813 campaign season, efforts were renewed with somewhat more success, partly because naval preparations had gone forward.

The documents presented in the following section portray the early weakness and the gradual buildup of American naval forces on Lakes Ontario, Erie, and Champlain. The bulk of the action took place on Lake Ontario during the period under consideration; the proportion of documents selected reflects that fact. For the Navy Department, *whose main attention had been drawn to the Atlantic Theater, the war on the lakes was at first a matter of small concern, but as the magnitude of the northern land operations grew, so too did the amount of time, effort, and resources which the navy devoted to winning control of the northern lakes.*

The Provincial Marine of Canada

The few warships that sailed under the British flag on the Great Lakes during the first year of the War of 1812 were manned not by the officers and men of the British Navy, but rather by the Canadian Provincial Marine. This agency has been described by a Canadian military historian as "little more than a transportation service under the Quartermaster-General branch of the Army."[1] *Before the war began, the naval officers in charge were elderly, the vessels were largely in need of repair, and they lacked effective armament. Although the document which follows is dated 7 December 1811, it describes with fair accuracy the condition of the ships and stations of the Provincial Marine in June 1812. There had been little change during the six months that intervened before the declaration of war.*

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[1] *W. A. B. Douglas,* Gunfire on the Lakes: The Naval War of 1812–1814 on the Great Lakes and Lake Champlain *(Ottawa, 1977), p. 4. See also Douglas's "The Anatomy of Naval Incompetence: The Provincial Marine of Upper Canada before 1813,"* Ontario History *71, no. 1 (Mar. 1979): 3–26.*

LIEUTENANT COLONEL A. H. PYE, DEPUTY QUARTERMASTER GENERAL, TO GOVERNOR-GENERAL GEORGE PREVOST

REPORT ON THE PROVINCIAL MARINE OF THE CANADAS

The superintendance of the Provincial Marine forms an extensive branch of the Quarter Master Generals department in the Canadas. During the American war it was much more extensive than at present; there being a Naval force on Lake Champlain, of which nothing remains at present except the hulk of a vessel called the *Royal Ed-*

ward which is of no service whatever except furnishing an excuse for pensioning an old seaman who receives pay for the nominal charge of her. The Establishments on Lakes Erie & Ontario, however, are still of consequence; each being under the Superintendance of an Officer of the Quarter Master Generals department, who have their residence at Amherstburgh & Kingston where the Docks Yards are at present situated. The business on which the vessels are employed in time of peace is the transporting Troops & Government stores to the several posts in the Upper Province, & the nature of that business seems to point out the expediency of their being of a shallow draft & small, especially those that are to go to St. Josephs altho' the exigency of the times & the attempt on the part of the Americans to produce Vessels of great strength & dimensions obliged us to adopt a similar measure, which at times is attended with much inconvenience. For the *Queen Charlotte* on Lake Erie calculated to carry 16, 24 Pound Carronades & the *Royal George* on Lake Ontario calculated for 20, 32 pound Carronades tho' built as shallow as possible as to their draft of Water are however not sufficiently so to answer the intention, with the evident disadvantage of deficiency in the point of stowage & inability of working upon a wind. It would therefore be evidently expedient unless there was an ennemy of equal or superior force to be dreaded to have the service carried on by schooners from 120 *to* 160 *Tons* burthen built on the corvette plan & calculated when armed to carry from 10 to 14 Guns & not to exceed nine & half feet draft of water. Vessels of that class would answer both the purposes of Transport or War having more capacity for their size than the larger Vessels in the former qualification & in the latter being almost equal to them from the superior ease in manoeuvring & their small draft of water; particularly in the confined & shallow situations they would be most likely to be employed in. Those on Lake Erie particularly whose services are called for occasionally on the River St. Clair & the Lakes Huron & Michigan. Besides which they could be better managed by such men as are usually attached to them, the larger vessels necessarily requiring a proportion of able seamen.

The force at present on the Lakes is as follows.

ON LAKE ERIE

The Ship *Cambden*. Declared by a board of survey to be incapable of going to sea & even unfit to lodge the seamen during the winter.

The Ship *Queen Charlotte*. Quite new, but merely calculated for the service of Lake Erie itself, from her great draft of water.

The Schooner *General Hunter*. The only real serviceable vessel on the Lake, is falling fast into decay.

I would therefore venture to point out the expediency of immediately laying down a schooner to prevent the communication by the river St. Clair from being cut off.

ON LAKE ONTARIO

The Snow *Duke of Kent*. Now solely used in Winter as a barrack for the seamen & incapable of repair.

The Ship *Earl of Moira*. Requiring a thorough repair.

The Ship *Royal George*. New, but attended with the inconvenience of too great draft of water.

The Schooner *Duke of Gloucester*. The most useful vessel on the lake will shortly require to be replaced especially if the Civil Government do not procure a vessel for their service she being at present in their employ.

The Dock Yards at Amherstburgh & Kingston have each a Master Builder with establishments perfectly adequate to the purposes of Building, repairing, & laying up the vessels; but the latter in the event of a War is so near the ennemy's country, so open to attack & difficult to defend without an expence beyond the required object & a force beyond what could be spared, that it has been considered a matter of expediency to remove the Naval establishment altogether from Kingston to some more safe & convenient place & York the capital of Upper Canada has been generally thought to combine in a greater degree than any other spot the desired qualities of convenience & safety. As to the particular situation in which the Naval establishment should, there, be placed, there are of course various opinions; but I am strongly against its being either on Gibraltar point or the spit connecting with it; & the spot pointed out to Genl. [John Graves] Simcoe by the late Captain [William] Baker, & approved by the former certainly appears the most advisable in every point of view, excepting what regards the marsh behind it.

Having said thus much on the removal of the establishment, I think it right to mention a subject nearly connected with its very existence. From experience we know that the average time of a Vessels duration on the Lakes may be averaged at eight years, & tho' many plans have been devised for preserving & seasoning timber a reference to facts would prove that of the quantity laid in for some

Lieutenant General Sir George Prevost, British Army

Years back, the far greater proportion has decayed in the experiement & consequently been lost. I have witnessed even *boards* that with every external appearance of being sound were on examination defective within, & tho' much enquiry was made & many plans have been proposed & tried, it has been generally necessary to build the vessels with green timber.-On the *Moira* however an experiment was made which tho' attended with all possible success, was not repeated because attended with a trifling additional expense & that was, filling up the whole space between the sheathing with salt.

When at Kingston, I had occasion to unsheath her in part on account of some necessary repairs & on examination found the timbers as perfectly sound & free from decay as the day they were first put in.-Vessels however that are built of red cedar have been found to last longer than those built of oak & it would be but little more expence & trouble to procure as much of that kind of timber as the service might require.

I have before mentioned that the superintendance of the marine on the lakes was vested in two Officers of the Quarter Master General's Department. I hope I shall not be thought as stepping beyond the rules of discretion if I venture to represent for the consideration of His Excellency The Commander of the Forces, the difference of emolument that exists with regard to those Officers whose situation is attended with arduous duty & heavy responsability, when compared with that of the Officers of the same rank in the department whose duties are only occasional & almost without any responsability whatever.-

The remaining part of the marine establishment in charge of the Quarter Master General's department consists in an armed Schooner for the service of the river below Quebec Six Gun Boats & the Batteaux used for the Transport of Troops & Goods to & from the Upper Province.

The Schooner *St. Lawrence* is calculated to carry 10 Guns & if properly armed with twelve pound carronades & furnished with a british crew, would be a formidable vessel of her class, & the Gun Boats when altered according to the plan proposed will be fully competent for any service for which they may be required.

In the above I have endeavoured to lay before His Excellency the Commander of the Forces all that I consider worthy of notice concerning the Provincial Marine of these two Provinces. Should it be found deficient I hope it will be attributed to my fear of obtruding my own particular opinions, where my own knowledge & the best intelligence I could procure should be my sole guides.

A H Pye
Dy. QMG:

Quebec, Decr 7th 1811.

Public Archives of Canada, C373, p. 29, as cited in William Wood, ed., *Select British Documents of the Canadian War of 1812* (Toronto, 1920; reprint ed., New York, 1968), 1: 240–44.

Embargo Patrol on Lake Ontario

On Lakes Erie and Ontario, as on the high seas, the United States Navy was engaged in enforcing the embargo laws during the period April–June 1812. The U.S. naval force on Lake Ontario was very weak. It consisted of one 16-gun brig, manned by an understrength crew and only a few marines.[1] *Her commanding officer was Lieutenant Melancthon T. Woolsey, who was the senior naval officer on the lakes until Captain Isaac Chauncey superseded him in September 1812. Woolsey sent frequent reports to Secretary Hamilton, who wrote few and brief communications in return. With an interval of approximately 7 to 10 days required for transmittal of letters, three weeks or more were required for an exchange of correspondence. Woolsey's base was at Sackets Harbor where a small fort watched over a protected harbor; frequently, however, he sailed in a southwesterly direction to the mouths of the Oswego and Genesee Rivers to pick up supplies and men sent up from New York City. In the letter that follows, Woolsey describes his capture of the Canadian schooner* Lord Nelson *(later renamed* Scourge*) for its violation of the embargo laws.*

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[1] *The marine commandant had noticed this deficiency and had given orders for a strengthening of the ship's marine detachment, as "Oneida is near to the probable scene of action." See Wharton to John Hall, 10 May 1812, pp. 108–109.*

LIEUTENANT MELANCTHON T. WOOLSEY TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

U.S. Brig *Oneida*
Sackets Harbour Roads
June 9th 1812

Sir

I have the honor to inform you that I sailed on the 3th Instant on a Cruise to the Westward-On the 4th (off Pultney Ville) discovered three sail to windward apparently standing in for Genesee River-gave chase to them, but night coming on and the weather being too hazey to run in for the mouth of the river hawld off shore for the night under short sail-At day light on the 5th discovered two schooners (supposed to be two of the three we had chased the day before) standing in for the land-At 7 P.M. we brought to one of the Schooners which proved to be the *Lord Nelson* from Prescot (a port opposite Ogdensburgh on the St Lawrence) said to be bound to Newark in Canada, she had no papers on board other than a loose Journal and a bill of lading of a part of her Cargo, but no Register, licence or clearance, Wether it was intended to smuggle her Cargo on our shores, or wether she was hovering along our shores to take on board property for the Canada market in violation of the Embargo law I was not able to determine-But appearances were such as to warrant a suspicion of an intention to smuggle both ways-I accordingly took her Crew out and sent her with my gunner on board as Prize Master to this port After dispatching her I stood off shore in chase of the other Schooner which the Master of the *Lord Nelson* informed me was the *Mary Hatt*, also a British schooner, but finding that she had crossed the Line-I hove up for this port in order to lay up the Prize and make my report to the Department All the proofs which I can collect respecting her voyage I will transmit without delay to the District Attorney

I have to report to you Sir the desertion of one of my Ordinary Seamen by the Name of Long who made his escape from sick quarters a few hours before I sailed on my last cruise-Attempts to apprehend him have been ineffectual-If the weather will permit I shall sail on another cruise tomorrow. I have the honor to be [&c.]

Mel^{n} T. Woolsey

ALS, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 19.

Lake Champlain in 1812

With the Battle of Lake Champlain more than two years away and the enemy expected to attack in other locations, Lake Champlain was a backwater of naval activity at the beginning of the war. U.S. Navy vessels amounted to two dilapidated gunboats grounded near Vergennes, Vermont. This inconsiderable force was under the command of Lieutenant Sidney Smith. Once the war began, however, agitation by local residents and the actions of the New York and Vermont congressional delegations served to stimulate a strengthening of the Lake Champlain naval forces, particularly after the British began shipbuilding activity in the most northerly reaches of the lake. The following letter from Lieutenant Smith reveals the lack of preparedness that prevailed.

LIEUTENANT SIDNEY SMITH TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Bason Harbour
June 16th 1812

Sir

The rumours of inevitable war are continually circulating in this quarter.-and these as well as information I have received (from a Gentleman direct from Washington) that orders have been issued for fitting out all the Gun boats) have induced me to suspect that my Orders have miscarried-The irregularrity of the mails on Lake Champlain is so great that the last Letter I had the honor to receive from the Navy Department did not come to hand in nearly three months after its date-Although according to the establishment of the mail I should have received it in seven days from Washington. At Vergenes in Vermont is the nearest Post Office to this place-Letters directed to that place would more probably come direct, as the local name of "Bason Harbour" is but little known. Sir I have the Honor to be [&c.]

Sidney Smith

ALS, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 31.

An Offer of Vessels for the Navy

The need for additional warships on Lake Ontario was no secret. The advent of war on the lakes rendered commercial vessels of little or no value; therefore it was not only patriotic but shrewd to offer these ships for sale to the navy. The following document contains such an offer.

DAVID PARISH TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Philadelphia
the 21 June 1812

Sir

The Change which has just taken place in our political Situation rendering it probable that Government will feel desirous of adopting immediate measures to carry on offensive maritime Operations on the Waters of the St Lawrence, I am induced to trouble you with these Lines to state, that having some years ago caused to be built; for commercial purposes, three very fine fast sailing Schooners, of the burthen of about Sixty Tons each, which navigate that river & Lake Ontario, they are at the Service of Government if it Should be thought advisable to purchase them.

These Vessells are at Ogdensburgh a place situated just above the rapids of the St Lawrence, 60 Miles below Kingston in upper Canada, where they may be examined & their Value fixed on, between the Agent that may be charged with this Commission by Government & myself, as I intend setting out for that part of the Country in ten days. I am with high Regard [&c.]

David Parish[1]

LS, DNA, RG45, MLR, 1812, Vol. 4, No. 122.

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[1] Parish was a wealthy land speculator who had bought 200,000 acres of land along the St. Lawrence River in 1808. He had moved to Ogdensburg in 1811 where he invested "hundreds of thousands of dollars [in] turnpikes, iron forges, and wharves." See David M. Ellis, et al., *A Short History of New York State* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1957), pp. 157-58.

War News Reaches Sackets Harbor

Lieutenant Woolsey heard the first confirmed report of war six days after the declaration. In the following letter, Woolsey informs Secretary Hamilton of the status of men at his disposal, who though enthusiastic had little seagoing experience. He shows a clear concern for the safety of American merchant vessels on the lake and in the St. Lawrence River, a theme that will reappear in later reports.

LIEUTENANT MELANCTHON T. WOOLSEY TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

U.S. Brig *Oneida*
Sackets Harbor Roads June 26th 1812

Sir

I have the honor to inform you that I was off Oswego on the 24th when I first heard of war having been proclaimed by the President of the United States. The Report appeard so well authenticated that I immediately bore up for this place in order to advise the Military of it and fill up my compliment. On my arrival here last night Colonel Bellinger handed me his official dispatches from his Excellency the Governor of this state[1] and as there was no longer any doubt of the actual existance of a war, I applied to Genl [Jacob] Brown, commanding this Brigade who permitted me to beat up for volunteers. And it is with great satisfaction I have the honor to inform you that I have just had twenty six hardy fellows join me with Lieutenant Daniel Stanton of the Militia at their head. I intend incorporating the Volunteers with my Marines and give Lt Stanton command of the whole. I would observe Sir that the volunteers are engaged only for one Cruise or until they shall be demanded by the Colonel. The *Royal George* is now at Kingston I believe waiting for a full crew, said to be now on their way up the River St Lawrence-The *Earl of Moira* lately repaired it is said is nearly ready for sea as is also the new Schooner *Prince Regent* lately launched at York.

As soon as the weather will permit I shall be off in quest of the Enemy. My Officers and Men are in good spirits. There is besides the *Lord Nelson* another prize Schooner here which by my advise is now landing her Cargo in order to be ready to run their Military equipments & Crew should you deem it proper Sir order them into the service. A number of our Merchant Vessels on the other side of the Lake I fear are detained. I have the honor [&c.]

Mel^{n} T. Woolsey

ALS, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 63.

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[1] Adjutant General William Paulding, Jr., to Lieutenant Colonel Christopher P. Bellinger, 23 June 1812, conveyed official word of the state of war. The dispatch is printed in State of New York, *Public Papers of Daniel D. Tompkins, Governor of New York, 1807-1817. Military*, 3 Vols. (New York and Albany, 1898-1902), I: 355.

Lieutenant Woolsey's Reports-I

Virtually the only primary source for information about the U.S. Navy's activities on Lake Erie during July and August 1812, is the correspondence of Lieutenant Woolsey with the secretary of the navy. This was a decidedly one-sided exchange, for the secretary was much more concerned with his oceangoing navy at this early stage. During July 1812, Woolsey gathered the forces under his command, taking men from wherever he could find them. He focused his efforts on safeguarding American merchant ships that were bottled up in American ports on the American side of the St. Lawrence River. In doing this, Woolsey hoped he could deprive the enemy of their use and strengthen his own command by converting some of them to warships.

Lieutenant Melancthon T. Woolsey to Secretary of the Navy Hamilton

U.S. Brig *Oneida*
off Oswego June 28th 1812

Sir

I am now standing in for the town with the Schooner *Julia* under my convoy after dismissing her I intend standing over to the Northern shore on a cruise.

I have engaged the *Julia* as a Gun Boat and will mount the long thirty pounder on her–I have just now written to Mr Forman[1] to cast a supply of shot for that Gun–also a supply of shot for three guns (I believe six pounder) now at Oswego.

I should not take the liberty of making any engagements of this Nature Sir without first consulting you–did I not really believe it absolutely necessary to bring all our resources in this quarter into action as soon as possible. I have the honor to be [&c.]

Mel^{n} T. Woolsey

ALS, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 72.

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[1] Joshua Forman was agent for and possibly part owner of Nicholas Mickle's furnace at Onondaga Hollow (now Onondaga Valley).

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON TO LIEUTENANT MELANCTHON T. WOOLSEY

Lt. M T Woolsey
Sackets harbor, NY

Nav: Depm't
2d July 1812

If in Your opinion, You can, without exposing Yourself to iminent danger from a Superior force, You will, upon the requisition of the quarter general, or of the commanding Military officer, at, or near the lakes, You will afford convoy, as far as Niagara to certain Military Stores, intended for Detroit, & the posts west of it, at the falls of Oswego

P. Hamilton

Copy, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 10, p. 85.

Lieutenant Melancthon T. Woolsey to Secretary of the Navy Hamilton

Off Sackets Harbour
U.S. Brig *Oneida*
July 4th 1812

Sir

Your Circular of the 19th June I have just this moment received. I shall in consequence of the last paragraph run in here the next mail day to receive your further Orders–I have just run off this place to take on board some supplies and in the course of one hour I shall be off again on another cruise–The *Royal George* twenty two guns and *Earl of Moira* of fourteen guns are now nearly ready for service and moored off Kingston Some suppose that all their Naval resources will be directed to these two ships and that they will be kept at Kingston for the purpose of defending that place–but I have no doubt but that an attempt will be made by them on the *Oneida*–I shall watch them narrowly and report to you my proceeding–All our Merchantmen except three are down the river St Lawrence–two schooners have been taken and burned by the enemy–How the others will fare God only knows. I am now fitting out the schooner *Julia* as a Gun Boat to carry the thirty two pounder originally intended for the *Oneida*–and the Schooner *Lord Nelson* is fitting for six guns these are the only guns on the Lake–I have written to Captain Chauncey to send me thirty six pounders which I contemplate mounting on the vessels now down the river–And the two vessels above named as soon as they can be equipped I intend dispatching to convoy the blockaded vessels up–Lieut Stanton whom I mentioned in my last letter I find to be a young gentleman of birth and education and possesses so much patriotism and such a zeal for the service that Sir I make bold to ask for him the appointment of acting Lieutenant of Marines.

I hope Sir you will excuse the liberty I take in recommending to you an Officer and appointing (which I have done) two Masters Mates and a Master to take charge of the vessels fitting out but Sir I know it to be for the good of the Service and the whole northern part of this State particularly on the frontier depend on Naval protection. For the recruiting Service Sir I shall want Money–as much as you will please to remit me. I have the honor to be [&c.]

Mel^{n} T. Woolsey

P.S. The whole amount of Ordrnace that I can muster is one Thirty two and Three six pounders.

ALS, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 82.

Governor Tompkins's Concerns

Governor Daniel D. Tompkins of New York was one of the most active governors in support of the war effort.[1] *His state was the scene of much military maneuvering and fighting from Niagara to Sackets Harbor, the banks of the St. Lawrence and eastward to Lake Champlain. He was intelligent, perceptive, and quick to grasp the essence of the military situation. In the following letter, he shows that he had sound information concerning the status of forces on both sides. Addressing Navy Agent John Bullus in New York City, Tompkins could not fail to realize that his letter would be forwarded to the secretary of the navy.*

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[1] *See State of New York,* Public Papers of Daniel D. Tompkins. Military, *Vol. I.*

Navy Agent John Bullus to Secretary of the Navy Hamilton

New York July 16 1812

Sir,

I have the honor to enclose you a Copy of a Letter which I received this morning from his Excellency Govornor Tompkins. As the Govornor may expect a reply to his Communication, as well to satisfy himself, as the Inhabitants & Officers of the Frontiers on our Northern Waters, In order that I may know the disposition of the Department, and put him in possession of the information required, I shall wait untill I shall have the honor of hearing from you on the subject. I have [&c.]

John Bullus

LS, DNA, RG45, AF 7, 1812.

[Enclosure]
(Copy) Albany July 13th 1812
Dr Sir

I find the arrangements of the Navy Department for our Northern Waters are complained of by the Inhabitants and Officers of the Frontiers. A person was here about ten days since from Lake Champlain to get some Oakum &c for the two Gun Boats there. They were then in Bason Harbour, one of them partly sunk in the Water, and the seams of both of them so open as almost to admit the hand; and I understand from Plattsburgh that no orders to put them in repair were received untill sometime after War was declared.

Those two Gun Boats manned and equiped in season would have given us Command of the Lake; and ought to have been in readiness to have retained that Command; but the British are repairing with great industry a Vessel at St Johns which will probably render our Gun Boats, by the time they are repaired, manned and equipped, useless or nearly so.

Lieut Woolsey wants men and also Ordnance to equip Schooners and Sloops belonging to Ogdensburgh, and other places on the American Side of Lake Ontario, which Schooners and Sloops will otherwise not only be useless but may and must fall into the hands of the British and Strengthen their Lake force which is already three fold of ours. After the Declaration of War Woolsey Came into Sacketts Harbor and twenty eight of our Militia Volunteered as Marines and went on board determined to give him the utmost assistance in their power.

It is known to the Government that the British have Superiority of Naval Force on Lakes Ontario and Erie. The military Stores destined for Detroit &c have consequently been stopped at Oswego and cannot get further with Safety till we open a secure passage for them. The Government is also apprised that the only regular Troops of the Enemy are on the frontier of this State in strong garrisons well supplied and that those regular troops are to be assisted by Indians and Militia. Under such circumstances unless the Navigation of the Lakes be maintained and our Frontiers immediately supplyed with every thing necessary for offencive opperations, and unless regular Troops and military Stores be sent towards Canada immediately & possession be taken of Montreal &c, Settlements of Several hundred Miles extent will be abandoned, the Spirit of a brave yeomanry be broken down and the Government and administration be condemned as inefficient or insincere with respect to the Conquest of Canada.

I mention to you as the representative of the Navy Department in this State the above matters of complaint in relation to the Lake forces; and request that immediate measures may be taken to furnish Woolsey with the requisite Sailors, Marines, Ordnance & Armed Schooners or Sloops to enable him to retain the Command of Lake Ontario, or at least our Shore of it.-I am [&c.]

Signed, Daniel D. Tompkins

John Bullus Esquire,

Copy, DNA, RG45, AF 7, 1812.

Lieutenant Woolsey's Reports-II

At the end of July, Lieutenant Woolsey launched an attack against two British warships in the St. Lawrence River. He sent Midshipman Henry Wells in the schooner Julia, *armed with a long 32-pounder and two 6-pounders, against the sloop of war* Earl of Moira *and the schooner* Duke of Gloucester *which were off Ogdensburg. The following letters show the buildup and aftermath of this event which was the principal action during Woolsey's command of the navy at Sackets Harbor.*

LIEUTENANT MELANCTHON T. WOOLSEY TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

U. S. Brig *Oneida*
Sackets Harbour July 21st 1812

Sir

I have the honor to inform you that on the 19th Instant at day break five sail of the enemy consisting of the *Royal George* & *Earl of Moira* ships, *Prince Regent* (I believe) the *Duke of Gloucester* and one other schooner were discovered in the offing beating up for this

Harbour-About six am. I got under way and stood off and on in hopes of having an opportunity of singling out my antagonist-which however was frustrated by the enemies concentring and taking such a position as completely to cut of my retreat Lakeward-About eight o'Clock the wind having hawled so far to the Northward as that the enemy could lay their course into the Bay the *Royal George*, *Earl of Moira* and *Prince Regent* stood in in a line ahead under a press of sail-As I had not sea room or wind enough to work to advantage and in order to prevent the enemy from bringing me between two fires I ran close in shore near the mouth of the Harbour and let go my stream anchor with a spring upon the cable dismounted all the starboard guns and had them mounted on the Battery (nearly ready for their reception). I gave orders to Lieutenant Wells as soon as our guns could reach the enemy to commence a fire which should be a signal for me to return on board. In the mean time I took charge of the thirty pounder mounted on the Carline with which at the distance of one and a half mile we hulled the *Royal George* three or four times-and effectually broke up their intended attack-from the confusion which appeared at one time on board the *Royal George* I am induced to believe that some serious damage must have been done by our shot

I have no doubt but that another attack is contemplated and that they are only waiting for a more favourable wind for the purpose-We are going on pretty rapidly with the works-one thirty two pounder, nine twenty fours three sixes and two nines are already mounted-I have written to Captn Chauncey for thirty six pounders. Twenty guns I hear are on their way-as soon as they are received-I intend withdrawing the large gun-to mount her on the *Julia*-put six guns on the *Julia* and six on the *Niagara*-and the remainder on the battery until some of the vessels can be got up the River-In the mean time I must exert my utmost to complete the works already commenced-Captain [Herman] Camp of the Artillery is an officer of worth and one from whom I can depend upon every assistance. I have the honor to be [&c.]

Mel^{n} T. Woolsey

P.S. Two thirty two pound shot thrown on shore by the *Royal George* we have got.

ALS, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 100.

LIEUTENANT MELANCTHON T. WOOLSEY TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

U.S. Brig *Oneida*
Sackets Harbour July 28th 1812

Sir

I have had the honor to receive your letter of the 11th As soon as I shall receive a draft from the Department I will agreeably to your request Sir give the volunteers five dollars each but only to those of them who remained on board and actually volunteered on the morning of the 19th Instant when the enemy was in sight and a prospect of a sharp action-Since the affair of the 19th I have had no intelligence from Kingston till yesterday when a Mr Smith and his family Refugees from that place arrived here. Mr Smith says that he was on board the *Royal George* a few days since but did not perceive that any injury had been done her-that she did not return from the expedition with the rest of the Squadron but remaind at anchor to the westward long enough to repair-She now lies off Kingston-The *Earl of Moira* and *Duke of Gloucester* are down the river opposite Ogdensburgh (one of our ports) I am now dismounting the thirty six pounder from the Cavalier[1] in order to mount it on the *Julia* together with two six pounders-I intend sending the *Julia* down the river under the command of Lieutenant Wells in order if possible to destroy those vessels or to cripple them so that they can be of no use to the enemy this season-If this object so desirable can be effected there will then be a possibility of obtaining the asscendency on this Lake.

I hope Sir you will excuse my asking so much at your hands but Sir the service here really requires another active Lieutenant-Mr Wells is a fine fellow and I would not wish him ranked. Respectfully [&c.]

Mel^{n} T. Woolsey

P.S. The expedition above mentioned is a profound secret.

ALS, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 113.

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[1] Cavalier: a raised work within a fortification, higher than the rest, used to command all the adjacent works and the surrounding country.

LIEUTENANT MELANCTHON T. WOOLSEY TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

U.S. Brig *Oneida*
Sackets Harbour August 3d 1812

Sir

I have the honor to inform you that on the 30th Ultimo I dispatched Lieutenant Wells in the Gun boat *Julia* down the St Lawrence in order if possible to capture, distroy or cripple the British Sloop of war *Earl of Moira* and schooner *Duke of Gloucester*. The *Julia*'s crew consisted of-Lieut Wells commander, Mr. Dixon[1] acting Master- Mr [William] Vaughan (a citizen of this place) masters mate-Mr Nicole (a volunteer Midshipman) Midshipman and aid to Lieut Wells, a number of Volunteer citizens, before the mast-Captain [Gould] Benedict, Lieutenant [Naaman] Goodsel and Ensign— —and their whole company of Riflemen (about thirty in number) making in the whole upwards of fifty men-The *Julia* has the long thirty two pounder and two six pounder mounted on her. On the 31st I recivd a letter from Mr Wells dated at 5 o'Clock A M of that day. He was then standing in for the mouth of the river with the *Royal George* in chase of him. He soon however gave up the chase and ran off this Harbour. My starboard guns being mounted on the Batteries it was impossible to meet her but I have them now all on board and shall sail with the first wind on a cruise. I this morning receivd a dispatch from Lieutenant Wells a copy of which together with my orders to him I do myself the honor to inclose. I hope the expedition will be so far sucessfull as-to enable us ultimately to become masters of the Lake. I should Sir feel confident of success had I the officer to which a vessel of the rate of the *Oneida* is entitled. It is Sir a fact that I am now about to sail without a single Officer that has seen any service in the Navy-Not one of my midshipmen have ever been at sea-against a greatly superior force. I have the honor to be [&c.]

Mel^{n} T. Woolsey

ALS, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 138. Endorsed: "order Lts [William] Burroughs [Thomas] Brown & 2s. masters to join Woolsey imm."

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[1] Samuel Dixon had been in the employ of David Parish as captain of the schooner *Collector*. See Franklin B. Hough, *History of St. Lawrence and Franklin Counties, New York* (Albany, 1853; reprint ed., Baltimore, 1970), p. 622.

[Enclosure]

U.S. Brig *Oneida*
Sackets Harbour July 30th 1812

Sir

You will proceed with the Gun Boat *Julia* to Ogdensburgh and as far as in your power lies contribute to the capture and destruction of the British vessels of War stationed off Prescot. For this purpose you will (as there is a great disparity of force) take a Station wide from the Village of Ogdensburgh and a tolerably long range for the thirty two pounder. There is no doubt of the bravery of those placed under your command suffer not a conciousness of this truth to lead you into any rash measures. I doubt not but powerfull aid will be rendered you by Major General [Stephen] Van Renselaer to whom an express has been sent this morning. Should you be sucessfull in this important enterprize you will give the necessary orders Either for securing the vessels at Ogdensburgh or bringing them up the River If they can possibly be brought up we are masters of the Lake. In passing down the River you will keep your men as much as possible concealed also cover the great Gun inorder to prevent as much as possible an allarm on the Canada Shore You will probably meet with opposition at the Narrows if so (and you can possibly effect it) force your passage down. In passing Cape Vincent you will be hailed by a boat stationed there to give You what information they may possess at that Place, the watch word is Woolsey. Sir you will I am confident do credit to your Station whatever the result may be recollect your pressence is indispensably necessary onboard the *Oneida* You will therefore hire or press horses and return with all possible dispatch to this place. Your Obedient Servant

(signed) Melancthon T. Woolsey

Lieut Henry Wells

P.S. Mr. Dixon is P.T. [pro tempore] your Sailing Master and Mr Vaughan your fighting Captain. Capt. Benidict Lieut. Goodsel and Ensign— —are Marine Officers Mr Nichols Midshipman and Aid.

Copy, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 124.

[Enclosure]

Off Ogdensburgh August 1st 1812
5 A.M.

Sir
Yeasturday about 3 P.M. we discoverd the *Earl of Moira* and *Duke of Glouceter* off Elizabeth Town we immediately attacked them but being powerfully seconded by 8 or 10 Guns on shore and upwards of twenty Batteaux full of troops we were not able to accomplish our object, as long as light continued we kept our Guns aplaying but fearing we might be overpowered by the Batteaux bording us and have thought propper to Cruse here and expect to attack them again tomorrow. we have received but little injury nobody wounded Yours Respectfully

(signed) Henry Wells

[To Melancthon T. Woolsey]

Copy, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 123a.

Lieutenant Melancthon T. Woolsey to Secretary of the Navy Hamilton

U.S. Brig *Oneida*
Sackets Harbour August 8th 1812

Sir

In my last letter of the 3d Instant I had the honor to inform you that the Gunboat *Julia* had been sent down the St Lawrence on a secret expedition. I now do myself the honor to inclose to you Lieutenant Wells's offical statement, as also a very circumstantial account of the action between the *Julia* and the *Earl of Moira*, *Duke of Gloucester* and a battery-gun by Judge [Nathan] Ford of Ogdensburgh to Major General [Stephen] Van Renssilaer [*Rensselaer*]. Although the object for which the *Julia* was dispatched was not attain'd I am happy it was undertaken as it in my opinion reflects much honor on the character of a young officer for whom I have a sinceer regard-and has been the means of effectually protecting the village of Ogdensburgh and all our merchant vessels laying at that place. Lieutenant Wells returnd to this place on the 5th. Together with the two papers before mentioned I have the honor to inclose to you my orders to Mr Vaughan and Mr Dixon-the former a gentleman who has ever since the keel of this vessel was laid evinced the most friendly disposition to the establishement and rendered many services for which I have not had it in my power to reward him-He has a large family and left them indisposed to serve in the *Julia* down the river. I think if he could be honored with the rank of Master to serve only on this Lake he would be of eminent service in the present contest-I make this application Sir without his knowledge-Three deserters have just arriv'd from Kingston who inform me that the *Duke* and *Earl* have returned to Kingston and that they are concentrating their Naval forces at that place in order to make another attack here. It is much to be lamented Sir that we have not sufficient means of defence. The works on shore are finished and ready to receive thirty six pieces of heavy Ordnance-We have only at present two long twelves, two nines and two sixes-with these guns and the *Oneida* we are obliged to defend ourselves against an exasperated and brave enemy of at least four times our force. To save time I applied a long while since to Captain Chauncey for Guns-but have not yet had an answer Application has been made to Governor Tompkins by the Military commander on this station but we hear of no guns being on the way. I have the honor to be [&c.]

Mel^{n} T. Woolsey

ALS, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 142.

[Enclosure]

Sackets Harbour
August 4th 1812

Sir

Agreeably to your orders of July 30th I proceeded down the St Lawrence in the Gun Boat *Julia*. At 4 P.M. July 31st I discovered one of the Enemies Boats rowing up the River with 2 officers & Six men ordering them to Come too & firing one Musket ahead they attempted to make thier escape I ordered the riflemen to fire in to her whether any were killed can not be ascertained. At 1/4 past 4 we discovered 2 vessels lying off the high Rocks 1/4 of a mile below Elizabeth Town or Brock Ville-at 1/2 past 4 we anchored 1 1/2 Miles from the Enemy, when the *Earl of Moira* Bro't her Broadside to bear uppon us & fired 3 Guns which fell short finding ourselves within reach of the Musketry from the Enemies shore we weighed and Stood nearer to the American Shore, within 1 1/4 Miles of the Enemy & comenced a fire from the 32 Pounder and one of the 6 Pounders which was immediately Returned from both Vessels & a Batterry of 5 or 6 Guns on Shore at 1/2 past 5 we discovered several Boats towing the Schooner inside of the Ship up towards the Town & some also towing the Ship-during this time there was an intermission of the enemies fire for about 15 Minutes apparently increasing their Batterry. Finding our six pounder fell short I directed that to cease the Enemy now commenced a severe fire from both vessels & Battery assisted by 2 Mortars The Battery appeared to have 8 or 10 Guns mounted 18 & 9 Pounders the distance from the Enemy at this time must have been short of a mile During the hotest of the fire the Ship appeared to have taken fire in her mizen rigging The firing was continued till dark when, finding we could not point our Gun with precission as the vessels were concealed in their own Smoke and judging it imprudent to Lie there over night on account of being boarded from the Enemies boats of which I could precieve a great number we made the best of our way to Ogdensburgh at which place we arrived at 3 A.M. August 1st Capt [Noadiah] Hubbard who volunteered from Cape Vincent with a Company of Militia was of great service in towing us down the River Several of the Enemies Shot struck the *Julia* but did no essential injury-The injury done to the Enemy can not be ascertained but must have been considerable as Carpenters were hard at work all the night and a greater part of the next day. Respectfully [&c.]

(Signed) Henry Wells

Melancthon T. Woolsey Esqr
Commanding U.S. Brig *Oneida*

Copy, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 142.

[Enclosure]

U.S. Brig *Oneida*
Sackets Harbr August 5th 1812

Dear Sir

Your two letters, one by Lieut Wells, the other by Mr Dodd I have had the pleasure to receive. The mouth of the River is blockaded by the *Royal George*, *Prince Regent* and one other vessel-of course it will be madness to attempt getting the *Julia* and the other vessels into the Lake-You will therefore consider yourself as commander of the *Julia* for the present. Mr Dixon will have orders to return immediately to this place, with all the men on board the *Julia* attached to the *Oneida*. The volunteers belonging to this place (I mean Citizens) may return to their homes. Genl [Jacob] Brown will give orders to Colo [Thomas] Bene to furnish you with as many men as are necessary to man the *Julia* You will keep her moored at the mouth of the Oswegachie river within reach of our musketry, in order to protect the village and vessels

I do not wish any of the Merchant vessels fitted for service until I can have positive assurance that guns will be sent on for that purpose. Your &ca

M. T. Woolsey

Mr William Vaughan
Commg U.S. Gunboat *Julia*

Copy, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 142.

[Enclosure]
Copy

U.S. Brig *Oneida*
Sackets Harbour August 5th 1812

Sir

On receipt hereof you will repair without delay to this place and bring with you, all the men attached to the Brig. For your expences on the road you will take duplicate receipts. Yours &ca

Mel^{n} T. Woolsey

Mr Samuel Dixon
Masters mate U.S. Navy
Ogdensburgh

Copy, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 142.

[Enclosure]

Ogdensburgh
August 2d 1812

Dear Sir

The day I parted with you at the Lake I returned to Morris Town where I remained untill five oclock in the Evening and found the *Earl of Moira* and the *Duke of Gloucester* Lying in the same position they were the morning you left Colo [David] Fords From the circumstance of My being present you will expect a circumstansial account of the Engagement which took place between the *Julia* Commanded by Lieut Wells & the two British vessels-and I assure you I regreted Exceedingly you missed this pleasant sight-The next day I wrote you a verry hasty letter by the post & directed the Carrier to put it in to the post office at Harrisburgh For fear that letter should not get to hand as Earley as your anxiety to know the result necessarily will be-I take the liberty of addressing this by an express which goes this evening The *Julia* has one 32 pounder & 2 Sixes the force of the British you are acquainted with-The *Julia* hove in sight about 5 Oclock & fell down within 1 1/2 miles of the British vessels at which time it fell perfectly calm at 1/2 past 5 the two vessels opened a heavy fire uppon the *Julia* for 1 1/2 hours which was returned with great Spirit by Lieut. Wells. The *Duke* & *Earl* was then taken in tow & got up to Brock Vill at which place a land Battery with a number of Guns had been got ready to play uppon the *Julia*-this change of situation placed the *Duke* & *Earl* (as well as the land Battery) within a little better than 3/4 of a mile of the *Julia* A severe & animated fire was now opened by the Vessels as well as the Battery uppon the *Julia*-The bravery of Lieut. Wells was by no means daunted in this unequal contest he returned the fire with redoubled animation for 3/4 of an hour a little after sunset Lieut Wells towed the vessel around the South side of a small Island under cover of which he Escaped thier fire for a short time he however remained nolonger behind the Island than the time it took to row past it which was 15 minutes during this time the fire ceased as soon as he passed the Island the fire commenced with great activity & continued untill the dusk of the Evening obscured the object which was not untill 1/2 after 8 oclock at which time Lieut Wells with the assistance of volunteers from the Shore had towed down the American side & got out of the reach of the Enemies Guns when the firing ceased & by 3 oclock the following morning the *Julia* was safly anchored in the harbour of Ogdensburgh without the loss of a single man or any damage whatever The distance the British Vessels were from Shore, to gether with the Smoke made it impossible for me to determine with certainty what Effect the *Julias* fire had uppon the Enemy altho I am satisfyed they were hit a number of times as the *Julia* passed the village of Morristown a number of 18 pound Shot passed through the village but fortunately with out Injury-Two of the Shot have been found The superior skill manifested on the occasion reflects credit uppon Lieut Wells & his Brave Crew-That Lieut Well should sustain a fire for at least 3 hours from 2 vessels of each superior force aided by a land Battery & Effect his escape can not fail to reflect the highest possible honor-The two vessels remained at their moorings till to day altho the wind has been fair for comeing down the river They moved their stations to day and anchored in the Middle of the river you will have the goodness to Excuse the haste of this letter I have had but a few minutes. I am verry sorry to hear of your indisposition I hope it will be of short duration be pleased to make my complements to the Cole. tell him he left us only ten hours to Soon You will also have the Goodness to make my compliments to Mr Lovit[1] tell him we shall suffer for want of him I want his genius to give that lively discription of this Briliant affair it deserves. Respectfully &c

(Signed) N. Ford[2]

Majr Generl Van Rensselaer

Copy, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 142.

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[1] John Lovett (1761-1818), Albany, N.Y., lawyer, was aide and military secretary to Major General Van Rensselaer.

[2] Nathan Ford (1763-1829) was the first judge of St. Lawrence County, an active Federalist, and agent at Ogdensburg for iron manufacturer and land promoter Samuel Ogden. See Hough, *History of St. Lawrence and Franklin Counties*, pp. 589, 593.

Secretary of the Navy Hamilton to Lieutenant Melancthon T. Woolsey

Lt. M. T. Woolsey esqr
Sackets harbour

Nav: Depm't
21 August 1812

I have received Yours of the 8 inst. I have the pleasure to say, that Your conduct & that of the officers & men under Your command is highly approved by the President.

You will receive herewith a warrant as a sailing Master in the navy, for Wm Vaughan.

I have ordered Capt. Chauncey at N York, to ship to You twenty thirty two pound caronades; they are now, I presume, on their way.

P. Hamilton

Copy, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 10, p. 131.

Woolsey Reports General Hull's Defeat

For American armies, the summer of 1812 was a period of defeat and humiliation. Their anticipated simultaneous attack at several places along the Canadian frontier never took place. Instead, Major General Sir Isaac Brock acted swiftly upon hearing of the declaration of war and ordered the seizure of the U.S. Army post on Michilimackinac Island in northern Lake Huron. This was carried out with surprise and success on 17 July. At Detroit, where an American army under Brigadier General William Hull had invaded Canadian territory across the Detroit River, there was a fatal delay. Fearing that he had become outnumbered, Hull fell back to Detroit where, on 16 August, he surrendered his entire force. Major General Stephen Van Rensselaer made no aggressive moves at Niagara, preferring to wait for reinforcements, while on 8 August, at Albany, the unready Major General Henry Dearborn agreed to a cease-fire from Niagara to Montreal that lasted almost a month.

Lieutenant Woolsey received the news of Hull's surrender three days before it reached Washington by a different route. He relayed word of it to the secretary of the navy by means of the following letter and *added that the several schooners he had sought to rescue at Ogdensburg were on their way up the St. Lawrence. Their safe passage was made possible by the cease-fire, under the terms of which military personnel and supplies were allowed to move unmolested.*

LIEUTENANT MELANCTHON T. WOOLSEY TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

U.S. Brig *Oneida*
Sackets Harbour Augt 25th 1812

Sir

It is with much regret that I inform you that news has arrived here to day that Govr Hull is defeated I have just this moment receid pr. express from Ogdensburgh a confirmation of the above intelligence-Salutes, elluminations &c at Prescot on the receipt of this disagreeable news officilly from Genl Brock The Merchant vessels are on their way up the River. If they arrive in safety-I want guns, and in fact every thing necessary for the military equipment of eight vessels to mount on an average eight guns and some heavy ordrace for their protection at this place in case we should be obliged to retreat. Our Batteries are now ready to recive Thirty Heavy Pieces The Battery carriages had better be made in New York. If Sir my requests are granted soon I promise you the Mastery on this Lake and the consequent reduction of Upper Canada.

I have ditaned the Mail to write the foregoing. I have the honor [&c.]

Mel^{n} T. Woolsey

Money I is absolutely necessary

LS, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 180.

Lake Champlain Unguarded

By the end of August, there was still no naval force on Lake Champlain ready to protect American interests. In the following letter *a resident of Plattsburgh, New York, comments on the fact and suggests that since the gunboats were not ready, other vessels were available.*

Benjamin Moore to Secretary of the Navy Hamilton

Plattsburgh
Augt 29th 1812

Sir

From the Multiplicity of business attending your Office, I Expect it must have Escaped your Notice, that there is two Gun Boats, belonging to the United States, upon Lake Champlain, Under the Charge & Care of Lieut Sidney Smith, of the Navy, and which has not yet been Ordered into Service, which circumstance is & has been for some time very mortifying to many of the friends of the administration and the well wishers of our Common Country and more Especially those that feel & Know their Exposed Situation to our Enemy. A large Number of Boats are already built others building & others purchased or about to be for our immediate use. I am Sir Your very [&c.]

Benj. Moore

LS, DNA, RG45, MLR, 1812, Vol. 6, No. 65.

Isaac Chauncey Ordered to the Lakes

Secretary Hamilton's most important decision regarding warfare on the Great Lakes in 1812 was the appointment of Captain Isaac Chauncey as commander of U.S. naval forces on Lakes Ontario and Erie. He was a seasoned and well-regarded officer, a steady if not brilliant man, who had administrative as well as seagoing skills. The major task facing Chauncey was the creation of two separate fleets which could challenge those being built and assembled by the British. Lieutenant Woolsey had held his own in the first months of war, but an officer of much greater experience and authority was needed to deal with the multiple problems of ship construction, supply, and naval strategy in the face of a growing enemy fleet.

At the time of his appointment, Chauncey was commandant of the New York Navy Yard and the gunboats assigned to New York. After his receipt of the following letter, it took almost a month for Chauncey to make his arrangements to ship ordnance, munitions, and supplies of all types to the lakes. He also arranged for a large number of skilled carpenters and shipwrights, as well as seamen, to accompany him on the journey north. Grouped with this letter are Chauncey's reply and one containing further instructions from Secretary Hamilton.

Secretary of the Navy Hamilton to Commodore Isaac Chauncey

Confidential & official
Isaac Chauncey Esq
Commanding naval officer
New York

Navy Depart
31 Augt 1812

The season has arrived, when your Country requires your active Services. The President of the United States has determined to obtain command of the Lakes Ontario & Erie, with the least possible delay–and the execution of this highly important object is committed to you.

With respect to the means to be employed, you will consider yourself unrestrained, minor interests must yield to the greater. The object must be accomplished; and all the means which you may judge essential, must be employed.

In addition to the public vessels now on the Lakes–you are at liberty to purchase, hire or build, in your discretion, such others and of such form & armament, as may in your opinion be necessary: to take from the yard under your command, from the *John Adams*, and from the gunboats, cannon, carriages, shot, powder, small arms and every other munition of war: to make requisitions upon the Navy Agent at New York for every deficiency: to order upon this Service any of the officers or the men of the *John Adams* or on the New York station, or in or near New York, to whom special service may not be assigned: to appoint a Surgeon, Surgeon's mates, and such masters and inferior officers as you may judge expedient & necessary: to open rendezvous for entering additional men if necessary; and in short to do every necessary act to carry into effect the object of these instructions.

I would not wish you to order any officer upon this Service, Senior to Lieut Woolsey; and in drawing men & supplies from the gunboats, you will consider those destined for Eastport as excepted-it being important, that they should be dispatched to their destination, as early as may be practicable.

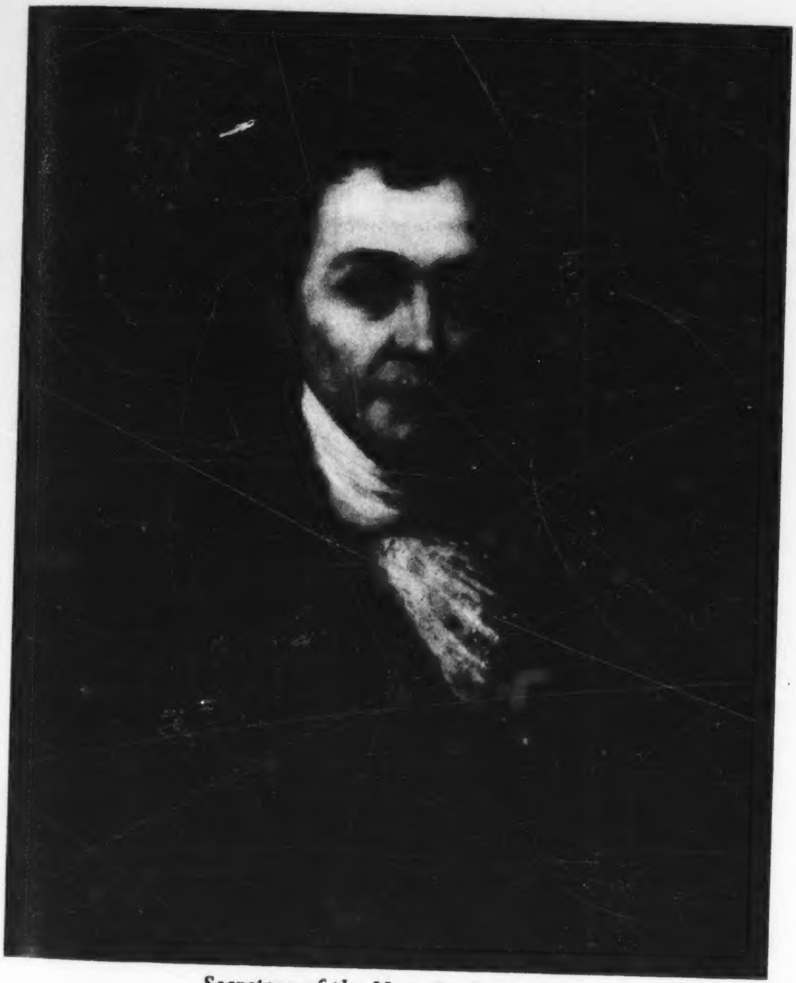
Col Wharton will order under your command a detachment of Marines to consist of

1 Captain
2 Lieutenants
3 Serjeants
2 Corporals
2 music & 50 privates, which whether acting on shore or on board vessel, is to be subject to your orders.

All the necessary Officers, Seamen, Marines, cannon, ball, powder, small arms of every description, provisions, Slops, warm clothing, watch coats, surgical instruments, medicine, hospital stores: cordage, canvas, &c &c you will cause to be transported with all the expedition in your power to Sacketts harbour on the Lake Ontario and to Buffaloe at the bottom of the Lake Erie, in such proportions as you may judge necessary for each place. At these two points, namely Sacketts harbour & Buffaloe your operations must be simultaneous-let the work of preparation go on at both places at one & the same time. Chosing one of the ports for your own residence, while preparing, dispatch an officer in whom you can confide, to the other, with orders to use every exertion, to execute the trust with every possible dispatch.

Not knowing the state of the Enemy's force I will not suggest to you, the number of men which may be necessary; but you will not take with you, or send, less than 200 to Sacketts harbour & 100 to Buffaloe, independently of officers and marines.

You will further consider yourself authorized to send from New York, such ship carpenters, caulkers, riggers, Sailmakers &c as may be required to enable you to bring into speedy & active operation all the means that you may judge expedient to employ. I recommend to you & authorize you, to appoint any gentleman, in whose honor, capacity & fidelity you can confide-to act as your confidential clerk. You may rate him a chaplain. His pay will be 40$ pr month & 2 rations per day.



Secretary of the Navy Paul Hamilton

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You will cooperate with the american army in that quarter. As one means of enabling you to do this with most effect, you will establish a cipher, by which when necessary, you will correspond with the commanding officer, and should it be found practicable & expedient, you may establish with the army a telegraphic communication–by which means you may be able to ascertain their movements and to communicate your own, with celerity and Secrecy.

It will be proper to keep your destination as secret as possible. The officer who may be charged with the transportation of the men &c must be enjoined not to communicate to any one this delicate point. In transporting the men &c you may use the gunboats if you judge it expedient & necessary.

The propriety of opening an immediate correspondence with Lieut Woolsey, now at Sacketts harbour, will readily occur to you. You will thus be able to ascertain the precise condition of our naval armament in that quarter, and can accordingly provide for its wants. Inform Lieut Woolsey that his being superseded, arises from no want of confidence in him, that on the contrary his conduct has in all respects, been highly approved, and that if the sphere of command had not been extended, no officer would be appointed over him. In the post, you may assign to Lt Woolsey, you will have reference to the honorable Services he has rendered, and to the respectful opinion entertained of his merits.

It will indeed be well for you to send to Lt Woolsey by express, a copy of this letter, and you will accordingly do so, with such instructions as you may judge necessary. He may immediately commence at Sacketts harbour such operations as may be advizeable.

As soon as you may think proper, you will order an officer, in whom you can confide, to take charge of the Yard in your absence; and such officer will from time to time, report to you his proceedings.

Prior to your proceeding on this service, additional orders will be necessary, and will be transmitted.

In conferring upon you this appointment, and this unlimited authority to provide the requisite means to carry into effect the object of these instructions: you will find evidence of the very high confidence placed by your government in your capacity, discretion, valor & vigour. I am with great respect [&c.]

Copy, DNA, RG45, CNA, Vol. 1, pp. 325-27. Unsigned letters preceding and following are endorsed "for Paul Hamilton C.W. Goldsborough."

COMMODORE ISAAC CHAUNCEY TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Navy Yard Newyork
3d Sepr 1812

Sir:

I was this day honored with your letter of the 31st ulto appointing me to the Command of the Lakes Ontario and Erie. This flattering mark of confidence I accept with pleasure, and shall enter upon the duties of this Command (or any other call of my Country) with alacrity.

I have already commenced the work of preparation. Forty Ship-Carpenters will leave here on Saturday in the Steam-Boat for Sacketts' Harbour: others will follow in a few days.

I have written to Lieut Woolsey by Express to make me a return of the Force of the Enemy as far as practicable to obtain it, and also what Vessels can be purchased on the Lakes that we can convert into Gunboats or Vessels of War. I have also directed him to prepare quarters for the men as the Season is advancing that will require their being sheltered in that northern Climate.

I shall send forward the munitions of war as fast as possible, but shall keep the most of the men here until I am ready to proceed myself. I have the honor to be [&c.]

Isaac Chauncey

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 14

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON TO COMMODORE ISAAC CHAUNCEY

Isaac Chauncey Esq.
Commandg naval officer
New York

Navy Depart
4 Septr 1812

confidential

In the letter of instructions transmitted to you, under date the 31st ulto, you were required to send to Sacketts harbour not less than 200 men, and to Buffaloe not less than 100. Altho you are not restricted to any number in either case, but have full authority to send to both as many, as you may judge expedient & necessary; yet from the terms used, you might infer, that it is our impression, that Buffaloe will not require as many men as Sacketts harbor-or that it is a place of subordinate importance. The contrary is the fact. Buffaloe is a point of at least as much importance as Sacketts harbor, and our opinion is, that it will require a force equally extensive.

One of the objects then of this communication is, to remove from your mind any impression that you may have received, as to Buffaloe being considered as a place of inferior importance to Sacketts harbor, and to leave you entirely at liberty, to employ such number of men and such other means, as you may judge necessary to enable you, to accomplish the object of your instructions. To enable you to form a satisfactory opinion as to the requisite means, you ought to know the precise extent of the enemy's force on those waters. This information can be afforded by Genl Dearborn, now at Albany with whom you will immediately open a correspondence, stating to him generally & confidentially the nature of your instructions, and requesting from him the information suggested, and any other in his possession, that may tend to facilitate your operations.

It is known that the enemy have on lake Erie the *Queen Charlotte*-an armed Schooner-and the brig *Adams*, the latter of which has lately been given up to them by the capitulation of Detroit; and near the lake Erie will probably commence our most serious operations in the first instance. At Buffaloe it is understood that there is a fortification, which will afford protection to your artificers while working; but you must have a respectable detachment of marines, both at Buffaloe & at Sacketts harbour-and I have accordingly this day directed Col Wharton to furnish you an additional Detachment of the same extent as the one ordered on the 31st ulto. I am [&c.]

for Paul Hamilton
C. W. Goldsborough

Copy, DNA, RG45, CNA, Vol. 1, p. 328.

Marines for the Lakes

If additional ships were to be acquired and built on the lakes, then more marines would be essential to complete their crews. Secretary Hamilton lost no time in communicating the department's needs to the commandant of the Marine Corps. He in turn informed Captain John Hall, officer in charge of marines at New York, to make the necessary arrangements. The letter which follows makes quite clear the requirement that these marines be completely equipped before departing for their station, for there were no sources of resupply on the frontier. The letter is couched in guarded language, as is seen in the lack of a mention of the destination for these marines. This was in accord with the secretary's desire for secrecy. The only clue to their destination is the reference to Commodore Chauncey.

Lieutenant Colonel Commandant Franklin Wharton, U.S.M.C., to Captain John Hall, U.S.M.C.

H.Q. of the Marine Corps
Washington, Sepr 1st 1812

Sir!

On receipt of this you will form a very select detachment from your whole Command, to consist of Three Sergeants, two Corporals, & Fifty privates, & which when formed you will by constant Drill & Exercise endeavour to make perfect for immediate Service, under an Officer who will be ordered to command it-it is very probable that the Guard of the *Adams* may be so changed as to admit of its being debarked, in that case Lieut [Charles] Hanna will be considered as one of the Subalterns to be attached to it, of which he can be informed-Should this take place the Selection my be made from it also.

You must immediately hold ready for delivery 50 Stand of Arms, & Accoutrements-& 50 Suits of Clothing to the Officer, who is to receive this detachment, & which are to be viewed as extra-that being given to him by you to be fully clothed, & equipt for the field. Should any Armes or Accutrements want repair, have them immediately put in complete Order, & should you be deficient in any Articles to execute this order to its extent, report to me instantly that I may take the proper Steps to obtain them. to lay before me perfectly the State of your Stores, by return of Mail furnish me with a Return of all the Arms, &c &c, with Clothing &c you have.

Capt Chauncey, who is acquainted with the Intentions of the Government in regard to this Command, must be consulted: you will therefore shew to him these Instructions, & obtain from him some Knowledge about the Guard of the *Adams*-in short the Command which you are here ordered to form, must be as far as possible perfect in every thing I am respectfully [&c.]

F. Wharton,
Lt. Col.Commt,
M. Corps

Capt. John Hall,
Commandg. Marines,
New York.

Copy, DNA, RG127, CMC, Letters Sent.

Woolsey Informed of His Relief

Although Secretary Hamilton had already ordered Captain Chauncey to transmit word of his succession to command to Lieutenant Woolsey, the secretary took the trouble to inform Woolsey directly. The letters that follow include this communication and Woolsey's response to the news that he had been replaced by a senior officer.

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON TO LIEUTENANT MELANCTHON T. WOOLSEY

Lt. M. T. Woolsey
Comg at Sackets harbor
N York

Nav: Depm't
5 Sep: 1812

confidential

I have received Yours of the 25 ult. On the 19 ulto I remitted You 4000$ which no doubt, You have received before this.

Guns & every other Munition of war, will be sent on with all practicable dispatch.

In a short time, you may expect Capt Chauncey on the Lakes, mean time he will correspond with You, & You will be making every preparatory arrangment, to obtain the Mastery of the Lakes Ontario & Erie–Capt Chaunceys authority as to the requisite means is unlimited.

P. Hamilton

Copy, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 10, p. 143.

Lieutenant Melancthon T. Woolsey to Secretary of the Navy Hamilton

U.S. Brig *Oneida*
Sackets Harbour September 5th 1812

Sir

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 19th ultimo also a remittance from the Treasury of four thousand dollars, in pursuance of your warrant No 2667.

It is with pleasure I inform you that all our Merchant vessels have succeeded in getting up out of the River. we can now muster eight or nine fine schooners–two of them can carry two thirty two pounders, one two twenty fours and the rest will average eight light guns each say nines and sixes. I am respectfully [&c.]

Mel^{n} T. Woolsey

ALS, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 17.

Lieutenant Melancthon T. Woolsey to Secretary of the Navy Hamilton

U.S. Brig *Oneida*
Sackets Harbour Sept. 7th 1812

Sir

Captn Chauncey has forwarded pr express to His Excelly Govr Tompkins & he to me a Copy of your letter of the 31st ult. together with his instructions. I assure you Sir I fill highly gratified in being superceeded by an Officer with whom I have seen much service-and for whose person and talents I have a sincere veneration. The delicacy you feel at superceding me and the manner you are pleased to express yourself of my past conduct Sir let me assure you I feel much flattered with.

The British Squadron have all gone up the Lake I was a half hour since preparing to pursue them in hopes of singling out one I was almost driven by desperation to this attempt-But I now conceive it of more importance than ever to preserve the Brig-For this purpose I am now warping into the Harbour and will mount my Gun on the Fort-I have not time to say any thing more at present, as the Express is hurrying me. Your obnt Servt [&c.]

Mel^{n} T. Woolsey

ALS, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 25.

Daniel Dobbins in Washington

An event of major importance for the navy's presence on Lake Erie was the arrival in Washington of Daniel Dobbins, a master lake mariner and shipwright who was thoroughly familiar with Lakes Erie and Ontario, the shipping that normally plied these waters, and the strength of the British lakes fleet.[1] *Dobbins's knowledge was immediately tapped and this information was forwarded to Commodore Chauncey as naval intelligence. The secretary appointed Dobbins sailing master, requested that Commodore Tingey provide Dobbins with the dimensions of a 40 ton gunboat, and ordered Dobbins to depart for Presque Isle (now Erie), Pennsylvania, where he would contract for the building of four gunboats. The contract was to be subject to the approval of Commodore Chauncey. The mood in Washington must have been one of urgency, for all these decisions were made within the brief period of five days, as shown in the following documents.*

[1] *See Max Rosenberg,* The Building of Perry's Fleet on Lake Erie, 1812-1813 *(Harrisburg, 1968).*

Secretary of the Navy Hamilton to Daniel Dobbins

Mr Dobbins
at Mr Oneal's

Navy Depart
11 Septr 1812

I have just understood from Col Monroe, that you are in possession of minute information relatively to the force of the Enemy, on the Lakes Erie & Ontario; and that you know of a number of vessels, which may be immediately engaged for our Service.

Will you, Sir, have the goodness, to afford to me, all the information in your possession, upon these interesting points-and as early, as may be in your power?

for Paul Hamilton
C: W: Goldsborough

Copy, DNA, RG45, MLS, Vol. 11, p. 144.

Secretary of the Navy Hamilton to Commodore Isaac Chauncey

Confidential
Isaac Chauncey Esq
commg naval officer
New York

Navy Department
11 Septr 1812

As heretofore advised-we must have possession of the Lakes Ontario & Erie this fall. Of the two lakes, if either is to be considered as the greatest object, it is lake Erie-but your preparatory arrangements for both must go on at the same time. You will have a number of vessels to build, and the timber is yet to be cut. We hope, that in twenty days from the time of your arrival at Sackett's Harbour & at Buffaloe, your vessels will be ready to act. You will have to build of green timber; but it is a case of necessity, and cannot be avoided. Employ artificers & men enough in every Department, and send them on without delay. At each of the places mentioned, there ought now to be an active and intelligent officer.

If our enemy should be apprized of our intentions he will immediately commence building, which would render the conquest more difficult. Every possible despatch, and every Secrecy must be observed. At all event, be the cost what it may, we must have possession of the Lakes this fall.

for Paul Hamilton
C W Goldsborough

Copy, DNA, RG45, CNA, Vol. 1, pp. 331-32.

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON TO COMMODORE ISAAC CHAUNCEY

confidential

Isaac Chauncey Esq
commg. naval officer
New York

Navy Depart
11 Sept: 1812

On the Lake Erie, it is understood, that the ennemy have the following vessels

	Queen Charlotte	of 20 guns	18 pdrs
	Adams	16	18
	Schr *Lady proud* [*Lady Prevost*]	12	9
	Brig *Hunter*	8	6 or 9
Merchant vessels	Schr *Nancy*	120 tons	
	Brig *Caledonia*	90 "	
	Schr *Mary*	100 "	
	Schr *Salina*	75 "	
	Sloop *Friends good will*	50	
	Sloop	50	
	Schr *Chippeway*	50	
	Schr *Elen*	60	
	& a small vessel requiring repairs, name not recollected.		

There is on the Lake, at Black rock, belonging to american Citizens, the following vessels-which you no doubt may immediately hire, or buy viz

Sloop *New Contractor*	each 65 tons belonging to Porter Barton & Co.
Schr *Amelia*	

Schr *Catharine* (new)	75 tons	Townsend Brownson or Brunson & Co.
Schr *Ohio* do	70 "	ownership in dispute
Schr *Zepha*	50	Lonslow Carter of Cheveland, Ohio
Schr *Commencement* (small)		Peter H. Colt.

You will probably find Black Rock a better place to build, than Buffaloe-it is about 3 miles from Buffaloe—and the road is good.

Messrs Porter Barton & Co.-Jasper Barish, and Erastus Granger own an abundance of timber in the neighbourhood of Buffaloe & Black Rock. I am told that you may get in that neighbourhood from 40 to 50 laborers.

Should you find it expedient, You can set up one or more vessels at Presque Isle, which is about 90 miles distant from Buffaloe.

Before you will receive this letter you will I hope have received minute information from Lt Woolsey, in relation to the Lake Ontario.

Pray, let not one moment be lost. with great respect.

for Paul Hamilton
C: W: Goldsborough

Copy, DNA, RG45, CNA, Vol. 1, pp. 332-33.

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON TO COMMODORE THOMAS TINGEY

Commre Tingey
N Yard, Washn

Navy Depart
15 Septr 1812

Be pleased to give to the bearer, Mr Daniel Dobbins, the dimensions of a small gunboat, of about 40 tons, calculated to carry one long 24 pd iron cannon-and give him also the dimensions of the requisite timbers. It is very important that Mr Dobbins should have this information in the course of this day:-as he intends leaving this tomorrow on a service of great importance.

for Paul Hamilton
C: W: Goldsborough

Copy, DNA, RG45, CNA, Vol. 1, p. 336.

Secretary of the Navy Hamilton to Daniel Dobbins

Mr Daniel Dobbins
present

Navy Depart
15 Septr 1812

You will proceed without delay to Presque Isle, on the Lake Erie, and there contract for, on the best terms in your power, all the requisite timbers & other materials for building four Gunboats–agreeably to the dimensions, which you will receive from Commre Tingey; and if in your power you will contract for the building of those boats, but such contract must be submitted to Commre Chauncey, or the officer that may be appointed by him to command the naval forces on the Lake Erie.

Immediately on your arrival, or as soon after, as may be practicable, you will communicate to Commre Chauncey, or to the officer that may be appointed by him to command on the Lake Erie, who will be stationed at or near Buffaloe, or Black Rock, the arrangements, which may be made by you to carry into effect the objects of these instructions–and you will govern yourself in your future proceedings by such Instructions, as you may thenceforth receive from Commre Chauncey or such commanding officer.

To enable you to comply with the engagements you may make, you can draw on this Department for any sum not exceeding Two thousand dollars. Copies of all contracts you may make, you will transmit to this Department.

For Paul Hamilton
C: W: Goldsborough

Copy, DNA, RG45, MLS, Vol. 11, p. 147.

Sailing Master Daniel Dobbins to Commodore Isaac Chauncey

Sir

I have the honour to transmit to you (the inclosed) a Coppy of My instructions from the Secretary of the Navy[1] and asure you Sir that I Stand Ready to execute any order that you May be pleased to Issue I have Made arangements for the timber and Iron work. Steel for axes I have been obliged to Send to Meadville for as there was not any at this place that is good for any thing. I intend going to Pittsburgh soon for the purpose of procuring Rigging and Cables, anchors I believe I Can get likewise the Riging can be got there Cheaper and that is good. be pleased to let Me hear from you at you arival so that I May Regulate my future Proceeding by you instructions. I have been oblidged to hire the Men by the day and Shall be oblidged to hire the hands the Same way. any farther arangements that I May Make I will inform you of I am with Respect yours

Daniel Dobbins
Master U S Navy

Eri Sept 28th[2] 1812

Copy, NBuHi, Daniel Dobbins Papers.

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[1] See Dobbins's warrant as sailing master, signed and dated 16 Sept. 1812 by Hamilton, in NBuHi, Dobbins Papers.

[2] "30th" is written in smaller lettering above this date.

Commodore Chauncey's Preparations

During three weeks of feverish activity, Isaac Chauncey demonstrated his ability for mobilizing men and war materiel. He had assumed the responsibility for sending all the necessary personnel, both military and civilian, to build and man ships on Lakes Ontario and Erie. Having procured all available supplies and contracted for the rest to follow, Chauncey sent several groups of talented artificers ahead with the seamen and marines to accompany him. He also dispatched Lieutenant Jesse D. Elliott to consult with Major General Stephen Van Rensselaer, who commanded U.S. troops on the Niagara frontier, as to the proper location for establishing bases and building ships on the lakes. It had already been decided to send a large complement to Sackets Harbor, by way of Oswego. Others were to be based at the mouth of the Genesee River, deemed a favorable location for shipbuilding. The rest would continue to Buffalo and the Niagara River, where, it was thought, a base could be established at Black Rock. Secretary Hamilton had hoped that Chauncey's departure and plans could be kept secret, but that was not to be. The following documents consist *of Commodore Chauncey's letters to the secretary accompanied by an extract from his journal detailing his actions since receiving orders for his new command.*

COMMODORE ISAAC CHAUNCEY TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Newyork
24 Sept 1812

I this day rec'd a letter from lieut Elliott by Express, a Copy of which I enclose together with the copy of a letter from Major Genl Van Rensselaer to lieut Elliott recommending him to proceed to Genessee River to which place I shall order some of the officers and men. I shall not however lose sight of Lake Erie to which place I have ordered the officers and Crew of the *John Adams*, and as soon as I have visited Sacketts' Harbor and Genessee River I shall proceed to Black-Rock, and if practicable to destroy the Enemy's force on that Lake this Fall, it shall be done. I have the honor [&c.]

Isaac Chauncey

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 77.

[Enclosure]
Lt Elliott to Comre Chauncey dated
Buffaloe Sepr 14. 1812.

I have with all possible dispatch repaired to the Head Qrs of Gen. Van Renssalaer. As regards my expedition he is entirely uninformed. He has not the most distant idea of the navigation of Lake Erie or any of its' resources. By his advice I have consulted with General [Peter B.] Porter who is perfectly acquainted with every part of the Lake. He is employed by the public to build many boats which are intended for the Troops when invading Canada. He has at the general expence agreed to build me 4 of the description named in your letter and have them ready in a few days. I have contracted for a sufficient quantity of Plank to deck and bottom 2 Ships of 300 Tons: have examined all the situations on Lake Erie; cannot get one that will answer our purpose. Those that have shelters have not a sufficient depth of water and those with water cannot be defended from the enemy and the violence of the weather. In extending my view to Niagara river I find that, immediately in its mouth, receiving its water from Lake Erie, we can be handsomely situated as regards building, fitting out, and erecting Barracks and Magazin. I enclose you a Sketch of the river Niagara where you will observe that about 3 miles on our side we have an Island carrying in from the Lake only 5 feet water and on the north side 12 feet at all times. When a strong southerly wind 14. One difficulty attending the getting our Vessels through the Rapids where the water runs about 4 Knots and being obliged to get by a strong Battery. Gen. Van Renssalaer has informed me that he would remove that difficulty by getting possession of the Battery. The roads are good with the exception of about 13 miles which is intolerably bad. Provisions are plenty. The British have a force of considerable moment. One Ship of 20 guns, 10 feet water badly manned: one brig of 14 guns: one brig of 10 guns and 2 Schooners of 10 guns: some other vessels unarmed say 4 in all. We have only 6: a Brig of 90 Tons; the others are Schooners of from 40 to 80 Tons; all good Vessels and in the intended place for a navy Yard. As those Vessels would not be sufficiently formidable to contend with the Enemy at present, Genl Van Renssalaer has thought it advisable to direct our attention to Lake Ontario which he says is of all importance at this moment: Suspend the fitting of small vessels on Erie, go on with the Barracks & Magazin and collect the Timber for Building. During the Armistice our Vessels became very much dispersed only a few of them at Sacketts' Harbor. Three were chased into the Gennessee river and one into Oswego: they are not very distant from this. He has satisfied me of the necessity of our attentions being directed to these 4 Vessels: his letter to me I enclose a copy of for your perusal. The carpenters have not arrived. I have by the Express ordered them to Gennessee Falls:[1] will set out in the morning myself: shall get on altering the Vessels until I have your further Commands. Should arming these Vessels meet your approbation, the ordnance had better immediately come on to that place together with the officers and men. our movements at this place will go on in the mean time as if attended to myself. Our movements as regards the Boats will be perfectly Secret: The alterations to the Vessels as well as building will be immediately in the Sight of the Enemy: the river is so narrow that the Soldiers are shooting at each other across. Ordnance for this place had better come on when the Snow is on the ground and then in Sleds. it will not be possible to get it in waggons. Direct your letter to me at Gennessee Falls. I have &c.

Copy, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 77.

1. On the Genesee River at site of present-day Rochester, N.Y.

COMMODORE ISAAC CHAUNCEY TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Navy Yd New york
24 Sepr 1812

Sir

As the place of my destination has been announced in the Publick papers, you may suppose that I have been imprudent in communicating it to my friends. In justice to my own character I assure you upon my honor that I have never communicated the subject to but five persons-to wit-The Governor, Lt Woolsey, The Master-Carpenter, The Navy agent, and Mr [Samuel] Anderson, neither of which I am Confident has told it to a second person. The Subject was first published in a Philadelphia paper, (the Democratic Press) and copied into the Newyork papers.[1] I have the honor to be [&c.]

Isaac Chauncey

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 73.

1. *New-York Evening Post*, 23 Sept., announced Chauncey's new command.

COMMODORE ISAAC CHAUNCEY TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Newyork
Sept. 26. 1812. Saturday

Sir

I have the honor of enclosing you an abstract from my Journal which will give you an idea of the disposition of men, ordnance, and Stores intended for the Lakes and now on the way. I shall positively leave here in the Steam Boat to day and regret that my stay has been prolonged beyond the time that I first fixed, but I trust not to the detriment of the publick service as by staying I have hastened the departure of the men and stores, and I shall now arrive on the Station before any of the Stores can be transported there. I trust however that you will not think I have been idle when you take into view that I received my orders on the 3rd instant only, and since that time I have sent from this place 140 Carpenters, about 700 Sailors and Marines (every man of which I am proud to say are volunteers) and more than 100 pieces of Cannon the greater part of which are of a large Calibre, with muskets, Shot, carriages &c &c compleat, and the Carriages have nearly all been made & the Shot cast since that time: nay, I may say that nearly every article that has been sent forward, has been made. I owe much, however, to the great exertions of Mr Anderson whose zeal for the publick service appears never to flag. In fact, I have found him so extremely useful and necessary to me that I have determined to take him with me for a few months as my private Secretary. Mr. [James R.] Wilson (the purser on this Station) will attend to Mr Anderson's business in his absence. This arrangement I hope will meet with your approbation.

After I arrive at Sacketts' Harbor I shall be better able to give you a more distinct view of my plans and prospects. After making my arrangements there, I shall proceed to Gennessee river, and from thence to Buffaloe, from both of which places I will write you as to our prospects against the enemy this Fall. If however, we should not succeed this Fall, we shall require 44-32 pounders, Carronades to be sent to Black-Rock this winter to enable us to open the campaign with effect in the Spring. I should therefore recommend that those guns be cast immediately and sent on to this place. I have the honor to be [&c.]

Isaac Chauncey

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 79.

Abstract.

Recd from the Honorable The Secretary of the Navy Instructions to assume command of the naval force on the Lakes Erie & Ontario, and to use every exertion to obtain command of them this fall. Authority given to me to build, purchase, or hire vessels for that object, to appoint officers; to employ the officers or men of the *John Adams*, or of the Newyork station; to purchase Stores of every description or to take them from the *John Adams* or gun boats; in short, to use all the means which I might judge essential, to accomplish the wishes of the Goverment.

Engaged Mr [Henry] Eckford to proceed with Carpenters to the Lakes.

Wrote to lieut Woolsey at Sacketts' Harbor by Express to give me a report of our naval force and that of the enemy on the Lakes; to inform me what merchant Vessels fit for our purpose could be obtained, and what force wd make us superior: to prepare quarters for 400 men: to build a magazin for the powder: to select a spot for building a Vessel of 300 Tons and a few gun boats: left him at liberty to purchase Vessels if any would answer our purposes, and directed him in such case to commence their equipment immediately.

Gave orders for casting shot, making up grape & cannister shot, making carriages, trucks, circles, spindles, rammers and Spunges, Ladles & Worms, Cylinders &c, for purchasing Slops, and the medicines, and Hospital Stores necessary for the Expedition, the navy Store furnishing but very few Stores of any kind.

Directed Capt [Joseph] Tarbell of the *John Adams* to land his detachment of Marines at the Navy Yard, to be under the command of Capt [John] Hall; and requested Capt Hall to have them drilled and put in the best order for actual service at an hours notice.–

5th Forty Carpenters set off for the Lakes.–

7th Ordered lieut Jesse D Elliott to proceed to the Head Quarters of Genl Van Rensselaer at or near Buffaloe and consult with him as to the best Site to build, repair, and fit for service such Vessels or Boats as may be required to obtain command of Lake Erie: gave him permission to purchase and to commence their equipment immediately: directed him to have timber sawed for plank for decks and bottoms for 2 Ships of 300 Tons each consulting with Mr Eckford: to build 6 boats 40 feet by 10 feet wide: to have quarters prepared for 300 men: a temporary magazin built: to learn the force of the enemy on Lake Erie, and their general Rendezvous, & to transmit to me general information upon roads, sites for building, provisions &c–

Sep 8th Opened correspondence with Genl Dearborn & Govr Tompkins

10th Eighty five Carpenters set off for the Lakes.–

11th Recd answer from lieut Woolsey and communicated contents to the Secretary of the Navy.

18th Sent 100 men exclusive of Officers: 14 heavy guns, with carriages, shot, muskets, pistols, powder &c &c for Sacketts' Harbor

21st Sent 6-18 pdrs—2-9s: 8-12s: 22-32 pdrs, carronades: 10-18 pdrs carronades, with slides, carriages &c &c to compleat the armament at Sacketts' Harbor for 350 men. Sent off to same place 230 Sailors.-

22 Twenty Carpenters sett off for the Lakes.-

" Ninety Sailors set off for Buffaloe.

23d Sent to Buffaloe 4-32 pdrs—2-18s:—5-12s: 10-6s: 2-12 pdr Carronades, with Shot &c &c, also some Slops: the medicines and Hospital Stores: muskets-pistols, pikes &c

24th Sent to Buffaloe 4-24 pdrs—5-12s: 10-4s: with shot, powder &c &c

Received by Express a letter from lieut Elliott and sent a copy of it to the Honorable The Secretary.

In answer same day directed him by Express, to proceed in altering the Vessels in Gennessee he mentioned as fit for our purposes.

In consequence of the information communicated by lieut Elliott directed The Storekeeper to change the destination of 2-24 pdrs—10-6 pdrs—10-4 pdrs with everything necessary for them, with muskets, pistols &c for 100 men, from Buffaloe to Gennessee River.

Directed Capt [Richard] Smith commanding the detachment of Marines to proceed, and keep them together until his arrival at Rome, there to divide them, placing one half under command of lieut [Charles] Hanna with orders to proceed to Gennessee River: with orders to proceed himself to Sacketts' Harbor.

Sept 24 Ordd lieut [John] Pettigrew of the *John Adams* to proceed with the detachment under his command to Gennessee River

25th The Marines sailed for Albany.-

Sent on Slops, medicines, & hospital Stores for Sacketts' Harbor.

26th Set off Sacketts' Harbor leaving orders for capt Ludlow to forward the Sails, rigging, blocks, anchors, cables &c &c to be prepared and fitted, to Sacketts' Harbor, for a Brig and 3 gun boats: also, sails, rigging, blocks &c for 3 gun boats to be sent to Gennessee River.

Copy, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 79.

A Local Source of Iron

Although much of northwestern New York was a wilderness in 1812, there were settlements along the river road from Albany to Buffalo that could offer manufactures to the navy. The following letter presents an offer to supply forged iron, an essential item in ship construction, fitting out, and naval armament. It is possible that the commencement of warfare on and around the lakes stimulated the business of such firms.

JAMES LYNCH TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Rome Septr 25th 1812

Sir,

Being informed that there will probably be ocasion for a considerable quantity of Iron ballest & cannon Shot for the navy on Lake Ontario; we take the liberty of suggesting to you that we have a furnace near this Village in full operation & calculated to supply a large quantity at Short notice upon terms as reasonable perhaps more so than any other furnace except Mr [Joshua] Forman's at Onondago, which being situated upon the navigation as well as ours is upon equal terms. We can deliver Shot at Sacketts harbor or Oswego as may be required.

We have addressed ourselves upon this subject to Captn Chauncey & have not as yet recd an answer. If there should be any department to which it more peculiarly belongs we would esteem it a favor to be informed by you, & will be glad to receive any Communication which you may please to make thro Captn Chauncey or otherwise.[1] & are Sir [&c.]

The Oneida Iron Manufag Co. by
James Lynch

LS, DNA, RG45, MLR, 1812, Vol. 51, No. 142.

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[1] Secretary Hamilton responded favorably to this inquiry. On 11 Dec. he ordered Navy Agent John Bullus to make a contract with Lynch "on the best terms in your power." See Hamilton to Bullus, 11 Dec. 1812, DNA, RG45, MLS, Vol. 11, p. 170.

Lieutenant Macdonough Ordered to Lake Champlain

The paucity of communications from Lieutenant Sidney Smith on Lake Champlain, in addition to reports of inactivity, stimulated Secretary Hamilton to send a more experienced and energetic officer to take command. On this lake, as on Lake Erie, there was virtually no naval presence. The fleet had to be built from the keel up, and it was to be a long and arduous process, as Lake Champlain evidently had a lower priority in its demands for naval resources than either Lakes Ontario or Erie. The following letter rescued Thomas Macdonough from the obscurity of commanding gunboats at Portland, Maine, and placed him in a position that would demand his utmost talents.

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON TO LIEUTENANT THOMAS MACDONOUGH

Lt Thos. Macdonough
Portland Maine

Navy: Dep:
28th Sept. 1812.

The President of the United States, has selected You, to command the vessels, on Lake Champlain. & You are required to proceed to that Lake, & assume the Command accordingly, without a moments delay Comre Bainbridge, or Capt: Hull, will appoint an officer, to take Your place at Portland during Your absence: but, You are not to wait the arrival of such officer at Portland.

You will therefore, immediately, on rect of this letter, proceed to Lake Champlain, & make every arrangement necessary Six vessels, have been purchased, by the War Departmt & there are two gunboats, built by the Navy Department, on the Lake; the whole of which, is to be under Your direction & command.

On Your arrival, You will communicate with Genl Dearborn, or the Commanding Genl who will afford You, every requisite assistance: & with whom You are to co-operate with the force under Your Command.

The two gunboats, are at or near, Bason harbour, under the command of Lt Smith.

I directed Comre Chauncey, to send thirty able seamen, to the Lake & Lieut: Smith to prepare the boats, for immediate service.[1] They are, it is hoped, at this time, preparing these boats & it is believed, that the six vessels purchased by the War Department, have also been preparing-Your presence however, is essentially, & immediately necessary-Should you find any deficiency of Cannon Arms &c-Genl Dearborn having command of the different military arsenals can give the necessary orders to supply such deficiency.

You may draw upon me for all necessary monies, until You can procure some suitable person to act as agent-Finding such a person, You can appoint him temporarily, & then procure Your supplies of provisiong money &c by requisition on him-& he will draw on the Department.

P. Hamilton

Copy. DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 10, p. 165.

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[1] See Hamilton to Chauncey, 14 Sept. 1812, DNA, RG45, CNA, Vol. 1, p. 335; and Hamilton to Smith, 14 Sept. 1812, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 10, p. 152.

A Difference of Opinion

Lieutenant Jesse D. Elliott, having conferred with various authorities, was quick to form opinions as to where ships should be built on Lake Erie. In the following communication, he expressed firm doubts that vessels could be successfully built, launched, and brought into the lake from Presque Isle. In this case, Elliott was informing someone who knew more about that place than he did. In 1813, Dobbins became the principal builder of gunboats and larger warships, successfully launched at Presque Isle, aided by the brothers Adam and Noah Brown and Henry Eckford from New York City.

Lieutenant Jesse D. Elliott to Sailing Master Daniel Dobbins

Buffalo Octo 2nd 1812

Sir,

Your Letter of 30th Ulto directed to Como Chancey or the Commanding officer on Lake Erie I have received togeather with its enclosed, a coppie of your instructions from the Hon. the Secretary of the Navy; each of which togeather with a coppie of this letter I have enclosed to him for his consideration It appears to me utterly impossible to build Gun Boats at Presquisle their is not a sufficient depth of water on the Bar to get them into the Lake, should their be water the place is at all times open to the attacks of the Enemy and in all probability when ready for action will ultimately fall into the hands of the Enemy and be of great annoyence to our force building and repairing at this place. From a slight acquaintence I have with our side of Lake Erie and with what information I have obtained from persons who have long navigated the Lake I am under an impression Lake Erie has not a single Harbor calculated to fit out a Naval expedition and the only one convenient I am at present at, which is between Squaw Island and the Main immediately in the Mouth of Niagara River. I have no further communication to make on the subject probably in a few days I shall be in possession of Como Chancys impressions when you shall again hear from me With sentiments of respect &c

Mr Daniel Dobbins
Erie

J. D. Elliott

ALS, NBuHi, Dobbins Papers.

Sailing Master Daniel Dobbins to Lieutenant Jesse D. Elliott

Sir

I Receved yours of the 2d inst and with Respect to this Place being unfit to build gun boats is a Mistaken Idea as there is a Sufficient of water to let them into the lake and not enough to let any force of the enemy in to destroy them it being Completely Sirounded on the sides by the land I have Made My arangements according to My instruc-

tions for the purpose of Providing the timber and Materials for them I believe I have as perfect a knowledge of the lake as any other person on it and I believe you would agree with Me if you were here–
Eri Octr 11th 1812

to J. D. Elliott
Commanding the Navy
on the lake at
buffaloe

Copy, NBuHi, Dobbins Papers.

Samuel Anderson's Task

The physical difficulties of transporting cannon, ordnance stores, and other supplies intended for the lakes may be appreciated by reading the following document. Its author, Naval Storekeeper Samuel Anderson, was Commodore Chauncey's confidential clerk, and he had apparently been asked to take charge of sending supplies after Chauncey's departure from Albany. Anderson's letter to Secretary Hamilton offers a rare description of how cargo was transported by riverboat, cart, and sled to the different naval bases in northwestern New York State.

Samuel T. Anderson to Secretary of the Navy Hamilton

Schenectady Thursday
8 Oct 1812

Sir,

I have the honor to inform you that I arrived at Albany on Sunday last, under orders of which you are apprized, and under others more particular, to attend at that place to the further distribution of the Stores to the Stations for which they are destined. But as the Stores are all thrown here, I left Albany for this place, and shall remain here and be at Albany occasionally, until I accomplish, as far as can be done by any means within compass, the end for which my orders have been given.

Immediately upon my arrival at Albany I waited upon Genl Dearborn to learn the place where the vessels mentioned in Lt Elliotts letter to Commodore Chauncey were. He informed me that they had certainly got into Oswego. From this place to Oswego is 200 miles, all of water carriage for Boats carrying from 3 to 7 Tons according to the depth of water in the Mohawk between Utica & Rome where the only obstruction of consequence is found. To Oswego then, by this water carriage, I shall order the Guns and Stores which were at first intended to be sent to Gennessee River for these Vessels. To Oswego also I shall order all the guns and heavy Stores which are intended for Sacketts' Harbor, to which place they must be conveyed from Oswego, by water in Small Boats that can hug the Shore, or the Vessels building at Sacketts' Harbor must escape to Oswego for their Armament. One or the other of these plans must be embraced if speedy operations are intended, for to convey by land, from this place to Sacketts' Harbor, at this season of the year, by any mode that can be adopted for this occasion, a piece of ordnance larger than a 9 pdr is an impossibility.

Turning your attention to Lake Erie, we ascend the Mohawk to its source where it is joined to Wood Creek by a Canal now in use: from Wood Creek we pass into the Oneida Lake, and thence into the Onondaga River: from the Onondaga into the Seneca River, and following its course, cross the Cayuga and stop at the Seneca Falls. Here is the extreme point of our water Carriage in that direction, and we are still 114 miles from Black Rock. The length of time which it will require to arrive at the Seneca Falls; the badness of the Roads from that point to Black Rock, the advanced Season, the necessity of making the greatest exertion to Ontario, all combine to destroy any hope of getting our cannon to any point on Lake Erie in time for operations this Fall. I shall nevertheless, push every thing forward as far as possible that they may reach Black Rock within two weeks after the roads become passable for our heavy Stores by the fall of Snow.

Upon my arrival here I found that but one Cannon had been sent on, and that the business of forwarding the stores was much retarded by the absence of the Contractor and the great body of the Boatmen who are employed. Notwithstanding these hindrances and many difficulties arising out of the novelty of our undertaking, I am sanguine that I shall be able to send forward within 10 days from this, unless prevented by the lowness of the water in the Mohawk, such Cannon & such Stores as may yet put it within our power, to contest this Fall, the command of lake Ontario with the Enemy.

The result of my efforts I hope to communicate to you in another letter before I leave this place for the Lakes. I am respectfully [&c.]

Sam^{l} T. Anderson

ALS, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 91.

Macdonough Arrives at Lake Champlain

Responding to the secretary of the navy's orders, Lieutenant Thomas Macdonough traveled from Portland, Maine, to Whitehall, New York, at the southern end of Lake Champlain. Upon arrival, he was confronted by several problems. The vessels he was to command were far from ready, the men supposedly sent from New York City had not arrived, and the best ships on the lake had been commandeered by the War Department. It would take some time to unravel this snarl. The following letters convey Macdonough's impatience and determination to gain control of the situation.

Lieutenant Thomas Macdonough to Secretary of the Navy Hamilton

Portland Octr 4th 1812

Sir,

In compliance with your orders of the 28th Septr 1812, I shall set out for Lake Champlain tomorrow morning, and I shall follow the other directions contained in your letter. I have the honor to be [&c.]

T. Macdonough

ALS, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 83.

Lieutenant Thomas Macdonough to Secretary of the Navy Hamilton

White Hall Lake Champlain
Octr 14th 1812

Sir,

I arrived here yesterday from Platsburgh, & after having a conversation with Genl [Joseph] Bloomfield. at present I meet with every requisite assistance in the equipment of the vessells by the War department, one of the Sloops purchased by that dept is in a forward state the others have not yet been touched but I have carpenters to commence with two of them to morrow. the remaining three are it is said old and unfit for service. I have not yet examined them, should they prove worth fitting out I shall begin with them also imediately. I shall want officers to command these vessells. I think old Midshipmen or Sailing Masters would be the officers for that service & the sooner they are here the more the service will be benefited by it. The men that Capt Chauncey was directed to send on, have not yet come. I have heard nothing of them, & I want them here about the rigging that I can remove the vessells from this place before the Ice Makes. no seamen are to be procured here and it is absolutely necessary that all these vessells have a Navy officer, to command them. I shall sail one myself I have not yet found a suitable person to appoint agent. a man has offered his services here & I expect to give him the temporary appointment.

I find a Mr Billings here in charge of one of the vesells purchaced by the War dept acting under Genl Dearborns orders. he has directly refused to place that vessell under my direction untill so ordered by Genl Dearborn. I have written & sent that part of my orders which relate to taking charge of the vessells on the Lake to Genl Dearborn, requesting him to arrange the business with Mr Billings. Should you think it proper to order any officers on, I shall want them imediately. I have the honor to be [&c.]

T. Macdonough

ALS, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 107.

Lieutenant Thomas Macdonough to Secretary of the Navy Hamilton

White hall Lake Champlain
Otr 26th 1812

Sir,

I have the honor to acquaint you with the State of the Naval force on this Lake. Two of the Sloops will leave this in a few days mounting each six, six pounders and one eighteen, the other four are under the direction of the War dept. One of which, the *President*, has gone down the Lake. She mounts 6 eighteen pounders and two twelves, being much the largest and best vessell on the Lake, the other three under the directions of the War dept are too old to carry guns, and, are employed, transporting troops &c. I am fastening over the two Gun Boats to mount each a twelve pounder, they will be ready in eight or ten, days. The difficulty of getting proper workmen, & materials, causes the delay. Genl Dearborn has retained the Sloop *President*, he replyed to a copy of my orders from you, which I sent him. "The *President* which has been fitted by Mr Billings, is by me considered as exclusivily attached to the War dept and to the Army under my Command, and cannot at present be delivered over to the Navy dept." It is the intention of Genl Dearborn to continue this Mr Billings, from some unaccountable cause, in the command of this vessell, in opposition to the wishes & opinions (as to the propriety of it) of Genl Bloomfield, & all the principall, officers, of the army here, agreeably to my orders from You, I consider it an assumption of my command, and you will readily perceive the difficulty such a strange division will make, I have no hesitation in saying this man is not a suitable person to have the command he holds. he is subject to no Martial law, neither can I at present regulate a single movement of the vessel in aid, or cooperation, with the Army, I am strangely deprived of more than half the force in having this vessel in the hands of those, that know not, what to do with her. Such a strange arrangement as this, having a Citizen to command the principal vessell on an expedition cannot but, be attended with fatal consequences.

The men which you directed Capt Chauncey to send me, have, I suspect gone to the Westward, as I have heard nothing of them no men are to be got here, I have written to Capt Hull at New York, on the subject of the Men observing they might have gone on Westward, & that he might anticipate directions from you, to send men on here. These sloops will require at least twenty men each, the Gun Boats, will require twelve, for their proper management.

I have appointed Messrs Reid & Hart, of this place acg. Navy Agent from whom I receive supplies of Money & Provisions, as I require.[1] I have the honor to be [&c.]

T. Macdonough

ALS, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 124.

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[1] For a statement of specific arrangements for a transfer of funds to Macdonough, see Reid & Hart to Hamilton, 16 Nov. 1812, DNA, RG45, MLR, 1812, Vol. 52, No. 58.

Capture of the Brigs *Detroit* and *Caledonia*

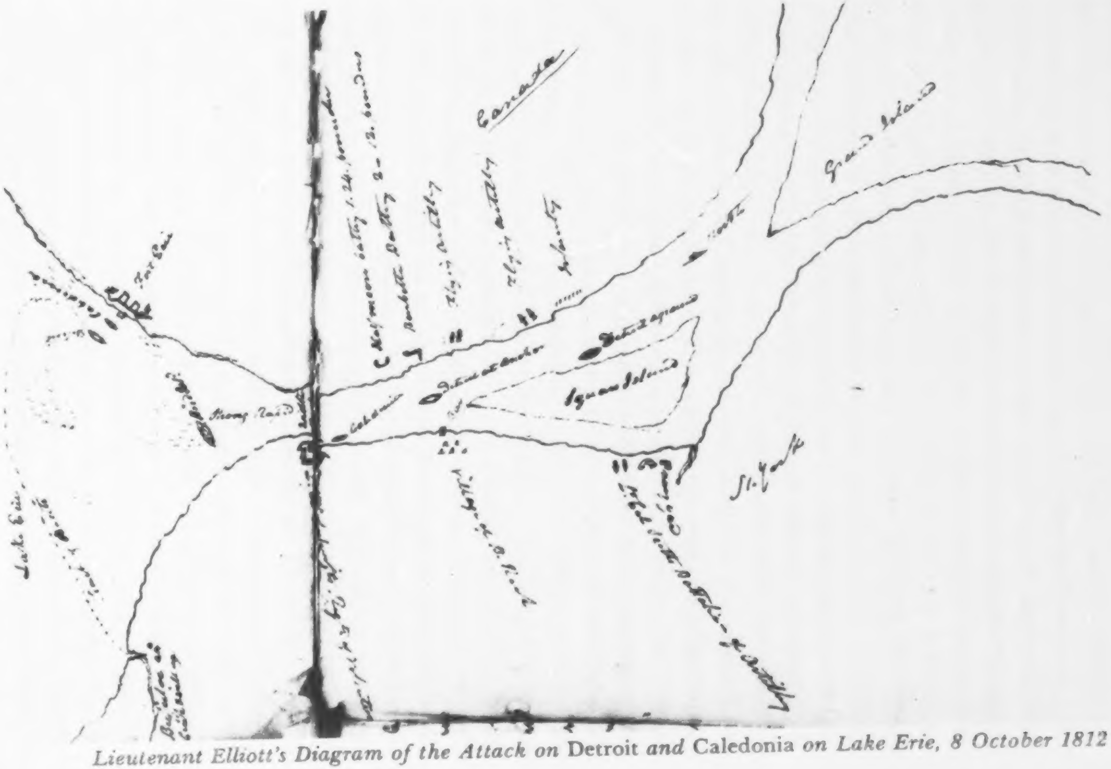
Lieutenant Jesse D. Elliott won the first naval battle on Lake Erie on 8 October, when he captured two British brigs that were part of the slender force belonging to the Provincial Marine. The event established Elliott as a man of singular courage and initiative. He mobilized a mixed force of sailors and soldiers and embarked them in two barges with 50 men in each. Approaching the two ships by stealth in the darkest hours of the night, he seized them both. Later, one had to be destroyed, but he had deprived the British of two valuable vessels at a critical time. Elliott went on to become one of the navy's most controversial officers. He participated in the Battle of Lake Erie, but engaged in an unbecoming quarrel with Commodore Perry after victory was achieved. He took Captain James Barron's side in the fatal quarrel that took Commodore Decatur's life on the Bladensburg dueling ground. A maverick officer, he went on to a relatively successful career despite his unpopularity among his peers. The following letters are Elliott's after-action report sent to the secretary of the navy and Major General Brock's report of the incident to Governor General Prevost.

Lieutenant Jesse D. Elliott to Secretary of the Navy Hamilton

Black Rock Octr 9th 1812

Sir

I have the honor to inform you that on the morning of the 8th Inst two Brittish Vessels which I was informed were his Britanic Majesties Brig *Detroit* late the U.S. Brig *Adams* and the Brig *Hunter* mounting 14 Guns, but which afterwards proved to be the Brig *Caledonia* both said to be well armed and manned came down the Lake and Anchored under the protection of Fort Erie. Having been on the lines for some time and in a measure inactively employed I determined to make an attack and if possible get possession of them, a strong inducement to this attempt arose from a conviction that with those two Vessels added to those which I have purchaced and am fitting out I should be able to meet the remainder of the Brittish force on the upper Lakes save an incalculable expence and labour to the government. On the morning of their arrivil I heard that our Seamen were but a short distince from this place and immediately dispatched an express to the Officers directing them to use all possible dispatch in getting the men to this place, as I had important service to perform. On their arrivil which was about 12 oclock, I discovered that they had only 20 pistols and neither Cutlasses or Battle Axes. But on application to Genls Smith [Alexander *Smyth*] and [Amos] Hall of the Regulars and Malitia I was supplied with a few arms and Genl Smith was so good on my request as immediately to detach fifty men from the Regulars armed with Muskuts. By 4 oclock in the afternoon I had my men selected and stationed in two Boats which I had previously prepaired for the purpose. With those Boats 50 Men in each and under circumstances very disadvantageous, my men having scarcely had time to refresh themselves after a fatigueing march of 500 miles I put off from the Mouth of Buffaloe Creeke at one oclock the following morning and at 3, I was alongside the Vessels. In the space of about ten minutes I had the prisoners all secured the Topsails sheeted home and the Vessels under way. Unfortunately the wind was not sufficiently strong to get me up against a rappid current into the Lake where I had understood another Armed Vessel lay at Anchor and I was obliged to run down the River by the Forts under a heavy fire of Round Grape and Canister from a nomber of pieces of heavy Ordinence and several pieces of flying artillery was compelled to anchor at a distince of about 400 yards from two of their Batteries. after the discharge of the first Gun which was from the flying Artillery, I hailed the shore and observed to the officer, that if another gun was fired I would bring the Prisoners on deck, and expose them to the same fate we should all share, but notwithstanding they disregarded the caution they continued a constant and distructive fire, one single moments reflection determined me to not to commit an act that would subject me to the imputation of barbarity. The *Caledonia* had been beached in as safe a position as the circumstances would admit of under one of our Batterys at Black Rock. I now brought all the Guns on the *Detroit* on one side next the Enemy stationed the men at them and directed a fire which was continued as long as our ammunition lasted and circumstances permitted. During this contest I endeavoured to get the *Detroit* on our side by sending a line (their being no wind) on shore with all the line I could muster but the current being so strong the Boat could not reach the shore, I then hailed our shore and requested that warps would be made fast on the land and sent on board the attempt to do which again proved useless. As the fire was such as would in all probability sink the Vessel in a short time I determined to drift down the River out of reach of the Battery and make a stand against the flying artillery. I accordingly cut the Cable made sail with very light airs and at that instant discovered that the Pilot had abandoned me. I dropped astern for about ten minutes when I was brought up on our shore on Squaw Island. got the boarding boat ready had the prisoners put in and sent on shore with directions for the Officer to return for me and what property we could get from the Brig. He did not return owing to the difficulty in the Boats getting on shore. Discovering a sciff under the counter I put the four remaining prisoners in the Boat and with my officers I went on shore to bring the Boat off. I asked for protection to the Brig of Lt Col [Winfield] Scott who readily gave it At this moment I discovered a boat with about 40 soldiers from the British side making for the Brig they got on board but were soon compelled to abandon her with the loss of nearly all their men during the whole of this morning both sides of the River kept up alternetly a constent fire on the Brig and so much injured her that it was impossible to have floated her. Before I left her she had received twelve shot of large size in her bends her sails in Ribbons and rigging all cut to pieces. To my officers and men I feel under great obligation. To Capt. [Nathan] Towson & Lt [Isaac] Roach of the 2n Regiment of Artilery Ensign Prestman [William *Presman*] of the Infantry to Captain Chapin Mr



Lieutenant Elliott's Diagram of the Attack on Detroit and Caledonia on Lake Erie, 8 October 1812

best copy available

John McComb Messers John Tower Thos Davis Peter Overstock & James Sloan resident gentlemen of Buffaloe, for their Soldier & Sailor like conduct In a word Sir every man fought as if with their hearts annimated only by the interest and honor of their Country.

The Prisoners I have turned over to the Military the *Detroit* mounted Six 6 pound long Guns A Comd Lt Lt Marines a Boatswn & Gunner and fifty six men, about 30 American Prisoners on board Musquets Pistols Cullasses and battle Axes. In Boarding her I lost one man one officer wounded Mr John C Cummings Actg Midshipman a Bayonet through the leg, his conduct was correct and deserves the notice of the Department. The *Caledonia* mounted 2 small guns Blunderbusses Pistols Musquets Cullasses and Boarding Pikes 12 men including officers 10 Prisoners on board. The Boat Boarding her Commanded by Sailing Master Geo Watts performed his duty in a masterly stile but one man killed and 4 wounded badly, I am afraid mortally. I enclose you a list of the Officers and Men engaged in the enterprise and also a view of the Lake and River in the different situations of Attack.[1] In a day or two I shall forward the names of the Prisoners. The *Caledonia* belongs to the N W Company loaded with Furs worth I understand 200,000 Dlrs. With sentiments of Respect [&c.]

Jesse D. Elliott

ALS, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 93.

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[1] The enclosed list has not been found; Elliott's diagram of the action is filed with the letter. See illustration on p. 330. To Commodore Chauncey, his immediate superior, Lieutenant Elliott sent a similar but briefer report. See Elliott to Chauncey, 8 Oct. 1812, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 127a.

MAJOR GENERAL SIR ISAAC BROCK TO GOVERNOR GENERAL SIR GEORGE PREVOST

Fort George
October 11t 1812

Sir,

I had scarcely closed my dispatch to Your Excellency of the 9th when I was suddenly called away to Fort Erie in consequence of a bold, and I regret to say, successful attack by the enemy on His Majesty's Brig *Detroit*, and the private Brig *Caledonia*, which had both arrived the preceding day from Amherstburg. It appears, by every account I have been able to collect, that a little before day a number of boats full of men dropped down the current unobserved, boarded both vessels at the same moment, and cutting their Cables were proceeding with them to the American Shore, when Major [Adam] Ormsby, who witnessed the transaction, directed the Batteries to open on them, and soon compelled the enemy to abandoned the *Detroit*, which grounded about the center of Squaw Island a little more than a Mile below Black Rock. She was then boarded by a party of the 49th Regiment, but as no Anchor remained, and being otherwise unprovided with every means by which she could be hauled off, the officer, after throwing her guns over board, and sustaining a smart fire of musketry, decided to quit her-A private, who is accused of getting drunk, and a prisoner of war, who was unable from his wounds to escape with about twenty brought by the *Detroit* from Amherstburg, remained however behind.-whom it was necessary to remove before the vessel could be destroyed, and Cornet [John] Pell Major, of the Provincial Cavalry offered his Service, Being unfortunately wounded as he was getting onboard, and falling back in the boat, a confusion arose, during which the boat drifted from the vessel, leaving two of the 41st, who had previously ascended, onboard. In the mean time the *Caledonia* was secured by the Enemy, and a cargo of furs belonging to the South West Company landed.

The Batterries on both sides were warmly engaged the whole of the day, but I am happy to say no mischief was sustained by the enemy's fire. I reached the spot soon after sun set and intended to have renewed the attempt to secure the *Detroit*: which, assisted by the Crew of the *Lady Prevost* which had anchored a short time before, I had every prospect of accomplishing, but before the necessary arrangements could be made, the enemy boarded her, and in a few minutes she was seen in flames.

This event is particularly unfortunate, and may reduce us to incalculable distress. The enemy is making every exertion to gain a naval Superiority on both Lakes which if they accomplish I do not see how we can retain the Country. Three Vessels are fitting out for war on the other side of Squaw Island which I would have attempted to distroy but for Your Excellency's repeated instructions to forbear-now such a force is collected for their protection as will render any operation against them very hazardous.

The manner our guns were served yesterday point out the necessity of an encrease, if possible, of Artillery Men to our present small number of regulars-The Militia evinced a good spirit, but fired without much effect-The enemy however, must have lost Some Men, and it is only wonderful that in a contest of a whole day no life was lost on our side. The fire of the enemy was incessant, but badly directed till the close of the day, when it begain to improve. Lieut [Charles Frédéric] Rolette who Commanded the *Detroit* had, and I believe deservedly, the character of a brave attentive officer. His Vessel must, however, have been surprized, an easy operation where she lay at anchor, and I have reason to suspect that this consideration was not sufficently attended to by the officers Commanding on board and on Shore.

We have not only sustained a heavy loss in the Vessel, but likewise in the Cargo, which consisted of four twelves, a large quantity of shot, and about two hundred muskets, all of which were intended for Kingston and Prescott. The only consolation remaining is that she escaped the enemy, whose conduct after his first essay, did not entitle him to so rich a prize.

The enemy has brought some boats over land from Slusher to the Niagara River, and made an attempt last night to carry off the guard over the store at Queenston. I shall refrain as long as possible, under Your Excellency's positive injunctions, from every hostile act, although sensible that each day's delay gives him an advantage. I have the honor [&c.]

Isaac Brock[1]
M.G.

ALS, Public Archives of Canada, Ottawa, Ontario, War of 1812, C677, p. 127.

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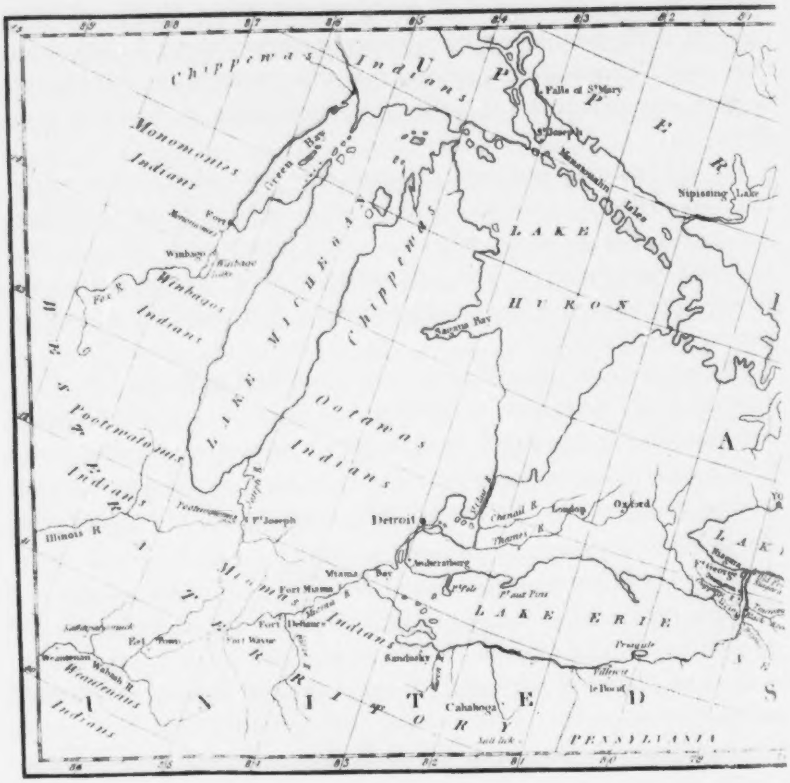
[1] This was the last official report General Brock wrote before his death in the Battle of Queenston Heights on 13 Oct. 1812.


89
88
87
86
85
84
83
82
81
Chippewas Indians
UPPER
Falls of St Mary
St Joseph
Manatoualin Isles
Nipissing Lake
Monomonies Indians
Green Bay
Fort Menomonies
Winbago
Winbago Lake
Fox R
Winbagos Indians
LAKE MICHEGAN
Chippewas
LAKE HURON
Saguina Bay
Ootawas Indians
A
Pootewatamis Indians
Pootewatamie
St Joseph
St Joseph R
Illinois R
Detroit
St Clair R
Chenail R
London
Oxford
Thames R
Andersburg
Miamis Indians
Miami Bay
Fort Miami
Miami R
Fort Defiance
Fort Wayne
Eel Town
Weauteneau
Wabash R
Weauteneaus Indians
Sandusky
Pt Pele
Pt aux Pins
LAKE ERIE
Presqu'isle
Villenet
le Boeuf
Niagara
Ft George
Chippewa
LAKE
Cahahoga
Salt lick
PENNSYLVANIA
WEST
TERRITORY
UNITED STATES
86
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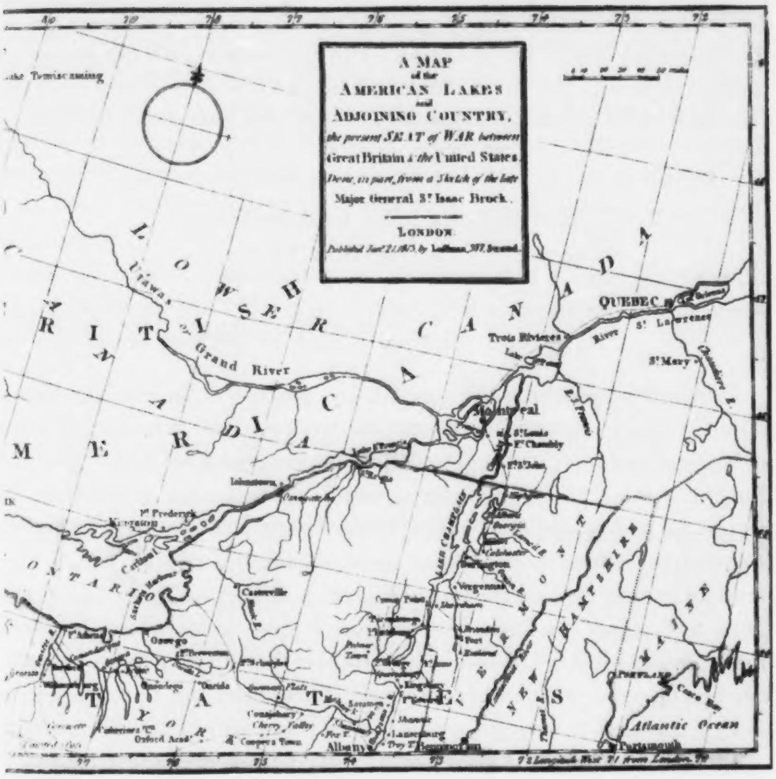
A MAP
of the
AMERICAN LAKES
and
ADJOINING COUNTRY,
the present SEAT of WAR between
Great Britain & the United States.
Done, in part, from a Sketch of the late
Major General S^r Isaac Brock.
LONDON
Published Jan^y 21.1813, by Leffman, 397 Strand.
Lake Temiscaming
LOWER CANADA
UPPER CANADA
Utawas Grand River
QUEBEC
Trois Rivieres
River S^t Lawrence
S^t Mary
Montreal
Johnstown
Kingston
F^t Frederick
ONTARIO
Oswego
Oneida
Albany
Bennington
Lake Champlain
Burlington
Vergennes
VERMONT
NEW HAMPSHIRE
MAINE
PORTLAND
Casco Bay
Portsmouth
Atlantic Ocean
72 Longitude West 71 from London 70

Chauncey's Arrival at Sackets Harbor

Commodore Chauncey arrived at Sackets Harbor after approximately ten days travel between New York, Albany, and Oswego. The bad roads and varying depth of water in the Mohawk River were to be key factors in matters of supply, as he observed in the following letter. The secretary had ordered Chauncey to seek action with the enemy as soon as possible, so as to obtain control of the lake before winter set in, but there were doubts in Chauncey's mind that this could be done.

COMMODORE ISAAC CHAUNCEY TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Sacket's-Harbor Oct. 8. 1812

Sir,

I arrived here on the 6th instant, in company with His Excellency The Governor, through the worst roads I ever saw, particularly near this place; in consequence of which I have ordered the Stores, intended for this station to Oswego, from which place I shall send them by water: for which purpose I have this day ordered Lt Woolsey to Oswego to purchase three schooners that are now lying there, upon which I intend to mount one thirty-two-pounder, and then take on board the guns and stores for Sackets'-Harbour. I have ordered one hundred men, besides officers (who are now on the road from Albany) to proceed to Oswego, instead of this place. These men will be sufficient to man the vessels at Oswego, and to bring them here, I think, in safety.

I found the *Oneida* in good order, and completely prepared for service. Lt Woolsey has purchased, by my orders, the Schooners *Genessee-Packet*, *Lord Nelson*, *Collector*, *Experiment*, and *Julia*, all which are at this harbor, and now preparing for service. I intend to put upon these vessels, one or two heavy guns, as the vessels may be able to bear them. If the guns and stores arrive in time, these vessels as well as those at Oswego, will be ready to proceed on service by the first of November; in which case I shall seek the enemy on the lake, and if not to be found there I will look for him within his own waters. I am, however, apprehensive, that owing to the badness of the roads and the lowness of the water in the Mohawk, that the guns and stores will not arrive in time, for us to do any thing decisive aginst the enemy this fall. No exertions on my part shall be wanting to accomplish the wishes of the government before the winter sets in.

We have a ship on the stocks here which will mount 24, 32 pounders (carronades) and will be ready to launch in about six weeks. I have ordered the materials for another of the same description to be prepared, which will be built this winter. As there are no merchant vessels to be procured, I have ordered, in lake Erie, the materials for two brigs (that will mount 20 guns each) to be prepared at Black-Rock; besides three gun-boats all which will be ready for service for the spring. I am told, that it is utterly impossible to transport any ordnance to Buffaloe, by land, at this time of the year; consequently, we could not arm our vessels upon lake Erie, before winter, even if they were ready.

I shall take an opportunity, in the course of a few days to write again, more in detail, upon the subject of the armament, at this place, as well as our prospect of success this fall.[1] I am [&c.]

Isaac Chauncey

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 106.

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[1] Chauncey to Hamilton, 12 Oct. 1812, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 114.

"To Obtain Command of this Lake"

Military reversals for American troops in the Michigan Territory made it all the more important for United States forces to cut British communications and to interdict their supply lines which stretched from Quebec and Montreal to Kingston, York, the Niagara peninsula, and thence to Amherstburg and Detroit. This depended on American warships gaining control of Lakes Erie and Ontario at the earliest possible moment. Secretary Hamilton's orders to Commodore Chauncey stressed this goal repeatedly.

By truly herculean efforts, starting first on Lake Ontario, Chauncey asserted himself. He created a small fleet despite numerous difficulties, pursued the enemy's ships to their homeport at Kingston, and maintained a blockade, effectively preventing the movement of valuable *troops and supplies from the St. Lawrence to Niagara. By the end of November when ice formed and blizzards blew, Chauncey had obtained control of Lake Ontario. This disheartened the British who devoted their efforts to the building of a fleet to contest control when navigation reopened in the spring of 1813. American efforts on Lake Erie were far behind those on Ontario, and the British retained control with a few vessels of the Provincial Marine, despite Lieutenant Elliott's daring seizure of* Caledonia *and* Detroit. *The following group of documents consists of a series of reports which Chauncey sent to Secretary Hamilton recording his obstacles, progress, hopes and fears.*

COMMODORE ISAAC CHAUNCEY TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Oswego 21st Oct 1812

Sir,

I arrived here from Sackets Harbour on the 18th Inst. where I found four fine schooners from 77 to 105 tons. one of the Schooners (the *Ontario*) belonging to Porter Barton & Co. of Buffaloe I have taken and given a receipt for and will have her value'd as soon as I arrive at the Harbour. the *Charles & Ann* I have this day purchased for $5800 the other two I am in treaty for and expect I shall obtain them for about $5500 each altho the Owners ask's $6000 a piece.

These vessels are not only necessary to owne for the purpose of obtaining the Command of this Lake but we have no other means of sending our guns and stores from here to Sackets Harbour except by these vessels I therefore presume that you will think me perfectly Justifide in making the Purchass

None of our guns or stores have arrived yet. I went to the falls yesterday in hopes I should hear something of them but not a word. I cannot account for this delay. except the water in wood creek is so low that the boats cannot pass the Lake. This delay is mortifying beyond description particularly at this advanced season of the year. I trust that you will not blame me if I should not be able to accomplish the wishes of the government this fall I cannot do it without the means and I have exerted myself to the utmost to get these means forward but have been frustrated in all my endeavours. I however still hope that such parts may arrive in time as to enable me to do something befor the winter sets in I have the honor [&c.]

Isaac Chauncey

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 137.

COMMODORE ISAAC CHAUNCEY TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Oswego 22d Oct. 1812

Sir,

The foreman of the Carpenters sent to Buffaloe arrived here this Morning. They had commenced the alterations of three merchant Vessels purchased by Lt Elliott for account of the Navy Department, but the British has kept up such a constant fire with shot & shells upon the vessels and houses at Black Rock ever since the *Adams* and *Calladonia* was cut out that the Carpenters broke of and went to Betavia for safety and nothing could induce them to go back to their work. I have sent Mr Lavarah (the Foreman) back with orders to Lt [Samuel] Angus to endevour to get the Vessels down to Tonnawanta Creek where they will be out of the reach of the fire of the Enemy and where the Carpenters can work at them. Apprehensive that all the Carpenters cannot be employed to advantage at Buffaloe I have ordered one half to Sackets Harbour where I can employ them untill I can visit Buffaloe myself which I regret to say I cannot do for some weeks yet unless I relinquish my views upon this Lake, which I do not wish to do untill the frost drives me from it.

I have information to day that seven boats have arrived at the falls with two large guns and other stores I immediately dispatched Lt Woolsey with twenty men to assist in getting them in and out of the boats and facilitating their shipment to this place where if they arrive tomorrow I shall put them onboard of the Schooner *Ontario* and proceed myself with them to Sackets Harbour and leave Lt Woolsey here to receive the other guns and stores and put them on board of the other vessels and follow me to Sackets Harbour where if they arrive by the 10th of next month I shall proceed in search of the Enemy. I have the honor to be [&c.]

Isaac Chauncey

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 138.

COMMODORE ISAAC CHAUNCEY TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Sackett's harbor Tuesday
27 Oct. 1812.

Sir,

I arrived here the day before yesterday from Oswego in the Schooner *Charles & Ann* with a full cargo of military stores amongst which are 3 long 32 pounders and one 24 together with a number of Sixes & fours and some 18 pdr Carronades. These will enable me to fit out the vessels here immediately, and I am in hopes to be able to say to you by the next mail that I am nearly ready for a cruise.

I left Lieut Woolsey at Oswego to attend to the shipment of such guns and stores as may arrive this week, and I have reason to hope that the *Diana* will leave there for this place tomorrow, and that the other two will follow by Saturday.

I have this day prepared the *Oneida* for heaving down to clean her Bottom and expect to have her ready for sea by the 30th; and I hope to have all my little Squadron ready before the 10th of November and shall use every exertion to give you some account of the Enemy's Naval Force on this Lake before the first Day of December. I have the honor to be [&c.]

Isaac Chauncey

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 148. Endorsed in left margin: "very pleasing P.H."

COMMODORE ISAAC CHAUNCEY TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Sacket's Harbor
4 Novr 1812

Sir,

On Monday Evening last, I was told that the Picquet Guard on Horse-Island saw about 12 o'clock a Schooner look into Henderson's harbor about 7 miles from this place. As I expected on that day the *Diana* from Oswego with guns and Stores I was apprehensive for her safety. I therefore got underway immediately with the *Oneida* and stood for Kingston, determined to cut her off if possible. The night proved very dark and rainy with Squalls. I however found myself within 6 miles of Kingston at daylight on Tuesday morning, and as the Haze cleared away we discovered the *Royal George* and 2 large Schooners lying at Anchor about 5 miles to windward of us. Immediately wore Ship to the Southward and cleared for Action, expecting every moment that the Enemy would come down upon us, and it was out of our power to avoid an action, situated as we were within 4 miles of the Canada Shore which was bearing N. W., Kingston about N. E., the Charity Shoals S.E., and the Enemy S. W., with the wind W. S. W. I therefore was obliged to keep close upon a wind to the southward and passed within 4 or 5 miles of the Enemy, and kept in sight about 4 hours. All this time he took no notice of us whatever. This is the more strange as he had at least three guns to one and four times the number of men. I can only account for such strange conduct by seeing us at daylight in the morning stretching out (as we must have appeared to him) from Kingston Harbor, he must have supposed us one of his own Vessels.

I stood to the Southward until I made Oswego and then bore up and run down along the Coast and arrived here last Evening where I found the *Diana* with a full load of guns and Stores. I immediately had her discharged and commenced the alteration to mount 10-18 pounders Carronades upon her, and hope to have her ready in 36 hours. The other two Schooners I expect tomorrow.-I have the honor [&c.]

Isaac Chauncey

N.B. The British Vessels that we passed at anchor I presume were the *Royal George* 26 guns; *Prince Regent* 18 guns; *Duke of Glocester* 16 guns.

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 161.

COMMODORE ISAAC CHAUNCEY TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Sackets' Harbor
5th Novr 1812

Sir,

I have been under the necessity of altering the names of some of the Schooners purchased here which I hope you will approve of.[1] The Original names as well as the present ones are hereto annexed. I have the honor to be [&c.]

Isaac Chauncey

Original names of the Schooners purchased for account of the N. Depmt, U.S. on Lake Ontario	Present names of the Schooners belong to N.D. of U. States on Lake Ontario
Schooner *Charles & Ann*	*Governor Tompkins*
" *Diana*	*Hamilton*
" *Fair American*	*Fair American*
" *Ontario*	*Ontario*
" *Gennessee packet*	*Conquest*
" *Experiment*	*Growler*
" *Collector*	*Pert*
" *Lord Nelson*	*Scourge*
" *Julia*	*Julia*

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 162.

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[1] On 19 Nov., Secretary Hamilton gave his approval of these names and of the naming of the corvette *Madison* which was nearing completion at Sackets Harbor. See Hamilton to Chauncey, 19 Nov. 1812, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 10, p. 206.

COMMODORE ISAAC CHAUNCEY TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Sackets' Harbor
5th Novr 1812

Sir

The Ship building at this place will be launched in about three weeks. Will you be pleased to direct what her name is to be? If you had no objections I should like that *Madison* should oppose The *Royal George* and *Prince Regent*.

As I shall be obliged to leave this station for lake Erie as soon as the winter sets in, it will be proper to have a Commander for the Ship as soon as possible. She will be one of the best commands for a Master Commandant in the service: She is a Ship of nearly 600 Tons and will mount 26 guns-24-32 pd Carronades, and 2 long 9s. I have the honor to be [&c.]

Isaac Chauncey

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 163.

COMMODORE ISAAC CHAUNCEY TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Sackets' Harbor
6th Nov. 1812

Sir,

As I have reason to believe that The *Royal George*, *Prince Regent*, and *Duke of Gloucester*, have gone up the lake with Troops to reinforce Fort George, and as I have to believe that other Troops are waiting at Kingston for their return destined for the same post, I have determined to proceed with the force I have ready in quest of the Enemy. My present intention is, to take a position on the Canada Shore near some small Islands called the "False Ducks" where the Enemy are obliged to pass and where I will wait their return to Kingston. If I should succeed in my Enterprize (which I have but little doubt of) I shall make an attack upon Kingston for the purpose of destroying the Guns and Publick Stores at that Station.

I shall proceed for my Station this Evening or tomorrow morning with the following Vessels, to wit, Brig *Oneida*, and Schooners *Hamilton*, *Govr Tompkins*, *Conquest*, *Growler*, *Julia*, and *Pert*, mounting altogether 40 guns of different Calibres and 430 men including Marines. With this Force, I hope to give a good account of the Enemy although he is more than double our force in guns and men. His consists of the following Vessels as nearly as I can ascertain, to wit, The Ship *Royal George* 26 guns, 260 men; Ship *Earl of Moira* 18 guns 200 men; Schooners *Prince Regent* 18 guns 150 men; *Duke of Gloucester* 14 guns 80 men; *Taranto* 14 guns 80 men, *Governor Simcoe* 12 guns 70 men; *Seneca* 4 guns 40 men: making a grand Total of 108 guns and 890 men.-

The officers and men under my Command are all extremely anxious to meet the Enemy. We cannot command success but we will endeavour to deserve it.-I have the honor to be [&c.]

Isaac Chauncey

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 167.

COMMODORE ISAAC CHAUNCEY TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Sackets' Harbor
13th Novr 1812

Sir,

I arrived here last Evening in a gale of Wind the pilots having refused to keep the Lake. On the 8th I fell in with The *Royal George* and chased her into the Bay of Quanti where I lost sight of her in the night. In the morning of the 9th we again got sight of her lying in Kingston channel. We gave chace and followed her into the harbor of Kingston where we engaged her and the Batteries for 1 hour and 45 minutes. I had made up my mind to board her, but she was so well protected by the batteries and wind blowing directly in, it was deemed imprudent to make the attempt at that time: the pilots also refused to take charge of the vessels. Under these circumstances and it being after sundown I determined to hawl off and renew the attack the next morning. We beat up in good order under a heavy fire from The *Royal George* and Batteries to 4 mile Point where we anchored.

It blew heavy in Squalls from the Westward during the night, and there was every appearance of a gale of wind. The pilots became alarmed and I thought it most prudent to get into a place of more safety. I therefore (very reluctantly) deferred renewing the attack upon the Ship and Forts until a more favorable opportunity. at 7 a.m. on the 10th I made the signal to weigh and we beat out a very narrow channel under a very heavy press of Sail to the open Lake. at 10 we fell in with The *Governor Simcoe* running for Kingston, and chased her into the harbour. She escaped by running over a Reef of Rocks under a heavy fire from The *Governor Tompkins*, The *Hamilton*, and The *Julia* which cut her very much. all her people ran below while under the fire of these vessels. The *Hamilton* chased her into 9 feet water before she hawled off. We tacked to the Southward with an intention of returning to our Station at the Ducks but it coming on to blow very heavy, the pilots told me that it would be unsafe to keep the Lakes. I bore up for this place where I arrived last night.

In our passage through the Bay of Quanti, I discovered a Schooner at the Village of Armingstown which we took possession of, but finding that she would detain us (being then in chace of the *Royal George*) I ordered Lieut [J. S.] Macpherson to take out her sails and rigging and burn her; which he did. We also took the schooner *Mary Hatt* from Niagara at the mouth of Kingston Harbor, and took her with us to our anchorage. The next morning, finding that She could not beat through the channel with us, I ordered the Sailing Master in the *Growler* to take her under convoy and run down past Kingston, anchor in the East end of Long Island and wait for a wind to come up on the East side. I was also in hopes that The *Royal George* might be induced to follow for the purpose of retaking our prize, but her Commander was too well aware of the consequences to leave his moorings.

We lost in this affair 1 man killed and 3 slightly wounded, with a few Shot through our sails. The other vessels lost no men and received but little injury in their Hull and Sails with the exception of the *Pert*, whose gun bursted in the early part of the action and wounded her Commander (sailing master [Robert] Arundel) badly, and a midshipman and 3 men slightly. Mr Arundel who refused to quit the Deck although wounded, was knocked overboard in beating up to our anchorage and I am sorry to say was drowned.

The *Royal George* must have received very considerable injury in her Hull and in men, as the gun vessels with a long 32 pounder were seen to strike her almost every Shot, and it was observed that she was re-inforced with Troops four different times during the Action.

I have great pleasure in saying that the officers and men on board of every vessel, behaved with utmost Coolness and are extremely anxious to meet the Enemy on the open Lake: and as long as I have the honor to command such officers and such men, I can have no doubts as to the result.

I think I can say with great propriety that we have now the command of The Lake and that we can transport Troops and Stores to any part of it without any risk of an attack from The Enemy. although the whole of his naval Force was not collected at Kingston, yet the force at the different Batteries would more than counterbalance the Vessels that were absent. It was thought by all the Officers in the Squadron that the Enemy had more than 30 guns mounted at Kingston and from 1000 to 1500 men. The *Royal George* protected by this force was driven into the inner harbor, under the protection of the Musquetry by The *Oneida* and 4 Small schooners fitted as gunboats, the *Governor Tompkins* not having been able to join in the Action until about Sundown owing to the lightness of the winds, and the *Pert*'s gun having burst 2d or 3d Shot.[1]

We are replacing all deficiencies and I shall proceed up the Lake the first wind in hopes to fall in with the *Earl Moira* and The *Prince Regent* at any rate I shall endeavour to prevent their forming a junction with The *Royal George* again this winter. I shall also visit Niagara River if practicable, in order to land some guns and Stores that I have taken on board for that purpose. If the Enemy are still in possession of Queenstown, I shall try to land them a few miles below. I shall have the honor of writing you more in detail upon this subject on my return or perhaps before I leave here if the Wind should continue ahead. I have the honor to be [&c.]

Isaac Chauncey

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 176.

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[1] For the view of a Canadian historian, see C. P. Stacey's "Commodore Chauncey's Attack on Kingston Harbour, Nov. 10, 1812," *Canadian Historical Review* 32 (June 1951): 126-38.

COMMODORE ISAAC CHAUNCEY TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Sackets Harbor
17th Novr 1812

Sir,

In my letter of the 13th I informed you that I had directed The *Growler* to convoy the *Mary Hatt* (Prize) down past Kingston and come up on the South East Side of Long-Island, and join me at the Duck Islands. This service, sailing Master [Mervine P.] Mix performed as soon as the Gale abated that obliged us to make an harbor and in his passage to the Ducks he fell in with His B. M. Ship *Earl Moira* convoying the Sloop *Elizabeth* from York to Kingston. Mr Mix in a very gallant manner bore down upon the Sloop and took possession of her within 2 miles of the *Earl Moira* and arrived here safe with his prize and gave me information of the situation that he left The *Earl Moira* in. I immediately weighed with the Squadron (although a thick Snow-Storm from the N.E.) and stood for Kingston in hopes to cut her off from that harbor. About midnight the wind changed to the N.N.W. and blew a gale. We had much difficulty in weathering the Galops and were three different times during the night very near being wrecked upon the rocks on the North side of those Islands. I however persevered in beating up for Kingston Channel and at 11 a.m. on the 14th we got sight of the Ship just entering the harbor. Finding that further pursuit would be useless the wind having changed to the N.W. and blowing a gale, with a Severe Snow-Storm, the small vessels labouring extremely, and the ice making so fast upon the Slides of our Carronades that we could not have made use of them, I thought it prudent to make a Port & accordingly made the Signal for the whole Squadron to bear up for this place where we arrived the same evening.

The *Elizabeth* is a fine Sloop and can be fitted for service. She was in Ballast bound from York to Kingston. Capt James Brock of H.B. Majesty's 49th Regt (and a near relative of the late Genl Brock) was a passenger on board of the *Elizabeth* and had in charge a part of the Baggage of his deceased relative.

Yesterday Colo [*Lt. Col.* John] Vincent (who commands at Kingston) sent a flag of Truce to this place requesting that Capt Brock might be permitted to return on his parole, to which I have acceeded, and he left here this morning together with all the other Prisoners except one belonging to each of the Vessels whom I detained as evidence in their condemnation. Capt Brock has pledged his word of honor to return to this place immediately should you disapprove of my having granted him his Parole. We learned from the people who came in the flag that in our attack upon the *Royal George* on the 10th inst we did her much injury: that 4 Shot passed through her between wind and water, and that when She slipped and hawled on shore she was in a sinking condition, with both pumps going, 3 of her guns dismounted, her fore and main rigging cut away, several man killed and wounded, and the Ship very much injured in other respects. Many of the Shot that passed through the Ship, went Into the Town and injured many houses. The *Simcoe* that we chased into the Harbor the next day, was so much shattered that she sunk before she got to the Wharf, and is believed to be rendered useless, at least for this Year.

It is the general opinion that the Enemy will not attempt the Lake again this winter, but I am of a different opinion and think that they will repair the *Royal George*, and if they find the Coast clear, will endeavour to form a junction with their force at York. Of this I should have no objection provided they would come out and give us battle, but as I have no hopes of that, I shall endeavour to keep them separated. The *Govn Tompkins*, *Hamilton*, *Conquest*, and *Growler* are now cruizing between the Ducks and Kingston in order to intercept every thing passing in and out of that Port.

I have taken on board Guns, Shot, carriages &c &c for Niagara for which place I shall sail the first fair wind in company with The *Julia*, *Pert*, *Fair American*, *Ontario*, and *Scourge*. The 3 last I have fitted since the 13th and can add the two Prizes to my little force if it was deemed necessary, but I think myself now so completely Master of this Lake that any addition to my force would be useless unless the Enemy should add to his, which I think out of his power to do this winter.

I am now prepared to transport Troops or Stores to any part of the Lake with perfect safety (except from the Elements) and I have so informed Generals Dearborn, [Richard] Dodge, and [Jacob] Brown, and that I am ready to co-operate with them in any Enterprize that may be deemed practicable, against the enemy.

I trust Sir that you will allow I have not been idle since I received the honor of your appointment to this Station, particularly when you take into view the difficulties I had to encounter in creating a force sufficiently strong to command this Lake this Fall, and I should certainly have destroyed the principle naval force of the Enemy but from the circumstance of a Squall which enabled him to take Shelter under the guns of his Fortifications. If however Col [Alexander] Macomb who is now on his march arrives before the severe weather sets in, I will again attack him in his present position, and shall have no doubt of complete success.

I herewith enclose a list of the killed and wounded and a Statement of the damage sustained by the Squadron: also a list of Prizes and Prisoners taken from the Enemy. I have the honor to be

Isaac Chauncey

N.B. Be pleased to correct an error in the date of my communication of the 13th inst. It was the 8th we left this place, and fell in with the Enemy on the 9th and engaged him on the 10th. This error arose from my being much hurried in taking notes from journal.

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 183.

[Enclosure]

Return of Prizes taken by the Squadron under the Command of Commodore Isaac Chauncey.

Schr	*Two Brothers*	Burned
"	*Mary Hatt*	Brought in
Sloop	*Elizabeth*	"

Sam^{l} T Anderson
Secretary to the Commanding Officer
of the U.S. Naval forces on the Lakes
Sackets' Harbor
17 Nov 1812

Return of British Prisoners made by the Squadron under the Command of Comre Isaac Chauncey

James Brock	Capt. in the 49th Regt
George Miller	Master
Murney	"
Joseph Dourent	Seaman

Peter Bell	"
Jno Campbell	"
Wm Casteel	"
Joseph Cloukay	"
Geo Lamgley	"
Peter Tizderine	Mate

Sam^{l} T. Anderson
Secretary to the Commanding Officer
of the U.S. Naval forces on the Lakes
Sackets' Harbor
17 Novr 1812.

Return of the Killed & Wounded in the Squadron under the Command of Commodore Isaac Chauncey in his attack upon the *Royal George* and the Batteries at Kingston on the 10th Novr 1812.

Vessels Names	Names of the killed	rank	Names of the wounded	rank	Remarks
Oneida	Thos Garret	Sean	D. [David] Webber	QG	
"	—	—	Jno White	S	slightly
"	—	—	Wm Baker	B	
G Tompkins	none	—	none	—	
Hamilton	—	—	—	—	
Pert	—	—	Rt Arundel	Sg Master	By the bursting of the gun was afterwards knocked overboard & drowned
	—	—	E. [Eleazer] H. Massey	Midsn	all slightly
	—	—	T Harrison	B.M.	
	—	—	J. Johnson	S.	
Conquest	none	—	—	—	
Julia	—	—	Wm Palmer	O.S.	slightly

Sam^{l} T Anderson

Secretary to the Commander in
Chief of the U. States Naval
forces on the Lakes
17 Novr 1812

Return of Damage sustained by the Squadron under the Command of Commodore Isaac Chauncey in his attack upon The *Royal George* and The Batteries at Kingston on the 10th Novr 1812

Oneida	1 gun dismounted and 1 strand of the sheet Cable cut
Governor Tompkins	none
Conquest	none
Hamilton	1 gun disabled
Pert	large gun burst
Julia	2 Shot in her Hull
Growler	1 Shot through her magazine

N.B. all the vessels had a few Shot through their Sails

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 183.

COMMODORE ISAAC CHAUNCEY TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Sackets' harbor
21 Novr 1812

Sir,

In consequence of the appearance of an easterly wind, I weighed with the Squadron on the 19th and proceeded from this place with the intention of running for Presqu' Isle on the Canada Shore, for the purpose of intercepting the Enemy if he should make an attempt to form a junction with the vessels at York. It was also my intention to send a part of the Force to Niagara river and if the armistice was still in force to land a number of guns & stores that I had on board for that Station. We had scarcely cleared the harbor before the wind shifted to the Westward and encreased to a gale accompanied with a severe Snow-Storm. The cold was so intense and the ice made so fast upon the small vessels that I was (from motives of humanity and prudence) obliged to return to Port where we have remained ever since.

The Winter in this quarter appears to be fairly set in as it has been snowing for the last three days, and the upper part of this Bay is frozen over. In fact, this harbour was frozen quite across this morning. I however do not relinquish all hopes: we may yet have a moderate spell of weather for a few days. at any rate, I shall not return from the Lake until the Enemy has laid up his Vessels, or that I am closed in with Ice. I have the honor to be [&c.]

Isaac Chauncey

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 185.

Commodore Isaac Chauncey to Secretary of the Navy Hamilton

Sackets' Harbor
22 Novr 1812

Sir,

I have the satisfaction of informing you that Colo [Alexander] Macomb with a part of his Regiment (say about 400 effective men) arrived here yesterday, with orders from Major Genl Dearborn to cooperate with me in any enterprize against the enemy that may be deemed practicable. Colo Macomb has marched with uncommon expedition through roads which to an officer of less Zeal would have appeared impassable. The consequence however is that his men are so worn down with fatigue that they necessarily require some few days to recruit.

From the advanced season of the year I think that any expedition by water would be attended with much difficulty and great danger of the loss of our little naval force, and of consequence, of the ascendency that we have obtained on this Lake. Moreover, I have it from the best authority that the Enemy has collected a force at Kingston of upwards of 3,000 men, amongst which are 1000 Regulars of the 49th and Glengary Regiments.

At Prescott, (opposite to Ogdensburgh) the Enemy have about 1000 Militia and from 9 to 12 pieces of cannon. That place we could take and bring off the guns, but I think it very questionable whether the object of such an Enterprize is worth the risk of getting our little Fleet froze up in the St Laurence, a circumstance which might enable the Enemy to effect their destruction. at any rate I shall be governed by circumstances, and keep in view the main object of the Government (that of keeping Command of this Lake) and not risk too much for any partial advantage. I have the honor to be [&c.]

Isaac Chauncey

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 187.

COMMODORE ISAAC CHAUNCEY TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Sackets' Harbor
26th Novr 1812

Sir,

I have much satisfaction in informing you that the U.S. Ship "*Madison*" (so called until your pleasure is known) was launched this day without accident, amidst the acclamations of hundreds.

The *Madison* is a beautiful Corvette-built ship of the following dimensions-112 feet keel: 32 1/2 feet Beam: 11 1/2 feet Hold: 580 Tons, and will mount 24-32 pounders, carronades, and has been built in the short time of 45 days, nine weeks since the timber that she is composed of was growing in the Forrest. I trust that when fitted and manned that She will not disgrace her name or Flag.[1] I have the honor to be [&c.]

Isaac Chauncey

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 192. Endorsed at foot of letter: "All highly approved. P.H."

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[1] The first commanding officer of this ship was Lieutenant Jesse D. Elliott.

Perry Offers His Services

Master Commandant Oliver H. Perry conveyed word in the following letter that he was available for active duty on the northern lakes. Macdonough and Chauncey were already clearly in place on Lakes Champlain and Ontario. Perry's main contender for command of Lake Erie was Lieutenant Jesse D. Elliott who had already established a reputation for himself by his actions at Black Rock, but Perry was his senior. Yet, Perry still had to wait more than two months before receiving orders to Lake Erie.

MASTER COMMANDANT OLIVER H. PERRY TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Newport Novr 28th 1812

Sir

I have requested my friend Mr Wm S. Rogers to waite on you, with a tender of my services for the Lakes. There are fifty or sixty men under my command who are remarkably strong and active, and capable of performing any service; In the hope that I should command them whenever they should meet the enemy I have taken unwearied pains in preparing them for such an event. I therefore beg Sir, as a great favor, we may be employed in some way Servicable to our Country and honorable to ourselves. At all events, I hope Sir, you may have some situation for me more active than my present command.[1] Very Respectfully [&c.]

O. H. Perry

ALS, DNA, RG45, MC, 1812, Vol. 1, No. 121.

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[1] Secretary of the Navy William Jones appointed Perry to the command of Lake Erie after the personal intervention of Commodore Chauncey on Perry's behalf. See Chauncey to Jones, 21 Jan. 1813, DNA, RG45, CL, 1813, Vol. 1, No. 28; and Jones to Perry, 5 Feb. 1813, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 10, p. 240.

Lieutenant Angus in Charge at Black Rock

As was frequently the case when a senior naval officer was not present, the small naval detachment located at Black Rock on the Niagara River was placed under the army's overall command. On 16 October, Major General Van Rensselaer was relieved by Brigadier General Alexander Smyth. Despite weakened and unsteady troops, reinforced by militia unwilling to do battle on Canadian soil, Smyth planned an attack in late November against British positions opposite Black Rock.

Commodore Chauncey's need for Lieutenant Jesse D. Elliott's services on Lake Ontario left Lieutenant Samuel Angus in charge of the navy's contingent on the Niagara. On 27 November, General Smyth called upon Angus to cooperate with the army and to lead his men in a general assault across the river. The British repulsed the attack, causing severe casualties and forcing Angus and some of his men back into their boats. The first of the following documents provides details of that hard-fought action. Two succeeding letters show Sailing Master Dobbins writing Angus from Erie, Pa., in great frustration for want of instructions to proceed with his shipbuilding; and Lieutenant Angus, seeing that the navy's role on Lake Erie had been ended for the winter, writing to the Navy Department asking to be transferred to the Atlantic.

LIEUTENANT SAMUEL ANGUS TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Black Rock on the River
Niagara 1st Decr 1812

Sir,

I enclose you a copy of a letter from Gen. Smyth according to the purport of the letter Captn. [William] King of the U. States Infantry arrived about 12 O'Clock. I had ten Boats manned by Seventy Seamen, got them Embarked and left the Navy Yard about 2 A.M. I had previous to my leaving the Yard, divided my boats in 4 Divisions the 1st Commanded by Lieut Wragg, 2d by Sailing Master John K. Carter, 3rd Sailing Master George Watts, 4th Sailing Master Alexander Sisson, Myself leading in Boat No 1 commanded by Midshipman Dudley. Boat No 2 commanded by Lieut Wragg, Boat No 3 Midshipman Holdup,[1] and the other Officers commanding, Divisions in sucession, having ordered them to keep as close to me as possible I had not got more than three fourths of the way across, before the British discovered us, and opened a severe fire from two Field Pieces and a sharp and well directed fire of Musquetry from about two hundred & fifty men finding the boats were dropping fast and our men getting wounded, determined me to make a desperate push with the 1st Division. I immediately jumped in the water desiring my Officers and Sailors to follow me, In which I was not only Gallantly but desperately assisted, by the Gallant and Intrepid Lieut Wragg and Midshipman Jams A. Dudley, volunteer Swartout and about twenty one of my brave officers and men. I ordered them to charge with their Pikes, they rushed up the Hill and routed the enemy in all directions, spiked the field Pieces, and run the Casson in the Water I was immediately after landing joined by the truly brave Holdup who behaved himself like a Gallant and valuable Officer, and by Captn King of the Infantry with twenty Soldiers who behaved well finding our numbers so small the enemy rallyed, and commenced a fire which induced me to order the Barrack & Barn to be fired. Mr Watts and Midshipn Graham had by this time landed, and Watts the Gallant and brave Watts in leading what few Men he could collect, was shot and shortly afterwards expired, Mids. Graham a lad of eighteen while firing the House was badly wounded his conduct was truly meritorious, finding by this time, My officers and men the Gallant 24 had one half been killed or wounded and the rest dispersed in different directions, or returned to the boats and not a Sailor or Soldier near me. I called for My Officers and Men. I found myself by this time, Surrounded by the enemy. I called out for them to Surrender or they would be cut to pieces, they paused for a moment, and having by this time got near ten paces from them they fired and attempted to charge. I turned and fired my Pistol, they Stopped to load, by this time I had got to the waters edge They fired again and charged I rushed into the Water, and got into the only remaining boat which had shoved off by going beyond my depth in the water. I found Captn King of the U.S. Infantry was not on board. I should again have landed but the greater part of the men where wounded and the rest dropping fast by the Galling and incessant fire of the enemies Musquetry, My Officers and Men that landed did wonders leading what men they could collect charged and routed the enemy in all directions from five to ten times their number. Captn King who had filed off to the left with his soldiers and four of my men spiked their Guns in two Batteries and was taken Prisoner with two of my Men the other two returned. I beg leave to mention that S. M. Carter, Sisson and Midshipn Brailsford were wounded in the boats, and I am sure that could they have landed they would have done their duty, out of ten Boats that Started the part of four crews amounting in all to about thirty five Seamen and about forty or fifty soldiers only landed, annexed is a list of the Officers and Men that landed with me in the two first boats No 1 & 2 and those officers who afterwards joined me.

2	Jos. Wragg	Lieut	Wounded
	Geo Watts	Sailing M	Killed
1	Jas A Dudley	Midn	
	Thos Holdup	"	Wounded
2	Wm Mervin [*Mervine*]	"	Do
	John H. Graham.	"	Do
	Wm Walker	"	
1	Volunteer Swartout		
2	John Campbell	Boatsn	Wounded
1	Caleb Heydon	Carpenter	
1	Thos Hodings	Qr Master who bore my flag and behaved most gallantly was mortally wounded but preserved the flag and died in a few hours	
1	Joseph Cutter	Boatsn Mate	Taken prisoner
1	John Rack	Do	Wounded
1	James Gray		
1	Giles Barnes		Wounded
1	Jno Clark		
1	Wm Anderson		Killed
1	John Hackleton		Wounded
1	S. J. Hornwall		Wounded
2	Robt Burges		
2	Charles Young		Wounded
2	James Lee		Killed
2	Jas Smith		
2	Jonah Webster		
2	Hugh Campbell		

2	John Lympney	
2	John Ford	Wounded
2	John Sterne	Wounded

I took prisoner Lieut Charles King Commanding Officer of the Royal Artillery, he was badly wounded and behaved most Gallantly, he remains under my charge and I shall wait your orders what to do with him, their was eight or ten prisoners taken by our Sailors and the Soldiers who Genl Smyth has in charge. On the next day we commenced fireing from my Batteries, which I erected since my arrival and completely drove them from the opposite shore. My Men and the brave Dudley, volunteered their services to cross the army over, Genl Smyth made a false movement kept his men embarked all day and disembarked them in the evening, for no evident reason, as the opposite shore was destitute of both Guns and Men (As an instance three of my Men crossed the River at 11 A.M. loaded their boat with different articles among them a quantity of Carpenters tools and set fire to a number of Buildings and Safely returned) it surprised me but he is best acquainted with his own reasons. I have not been able to do anything with the Vessels purchased on this Lake by Lieut Elliot for all the Carpenters that were employed left here during the fireing in taking the *Adams* and *Caladonia* and they would not return.

As my officers are so generally wounded I have selected Saml Swartout Esqr, Acting Aid to Genl Smyth to be the bearer of these dispatches who I wish to mention to you who volunteered his Services under my command on the evening of the 28th Ulto and who Gallantly led on with me and my officers and was in every situation where there was danger or Glory to be acquired. Joseph Roberts Surgions Mate, in the U.S. Navy volunteered his services and took one prisoner, let me particularly recommend him to your Notice. Lieut Wragg speaks handsomely of a Midshipn Mervin who was in the boat with him, who I likewise recommend to your Notice, as to the Gallt Wragg, Dudley and Holdup their conduct speaks for itself, Sailing Masters Carter & Sisson and Midshipn Brailsford, permit also to recommend to Your Notice, Mr Graham Acting Midshipn did his duty Gallantly and is worthy of Notice. Mr Heydon Carpr who was with me and in whose charge I delivered Lieut King of the Royal Artillery, Also Mr Campbell Boatsn who spiked one of the field pieces, they are both worthy of Notice, and My Gallant Petty Officers & Sailors 17 in number of boats No 1 and 2.

I feel fully satisfied that You will pay due regard to the conduct of my brave Officers and Men. Mr Swartout will be able from his intelligence to give every information relative to our different movements on that evening.

The enemy have lost a great number, my men were armed with Pikes, Cuttlasses and Boarding axes.

I Enclose you Sir a list of the Killed, wounded & missing. I have the Honor to Be [&c.]

Sam^{l} Angus

LS, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 192.

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1. Thomas Holdup, adopted son of Colonel Daniel Stevens, legally took the name Thomas Holdup Stevens in 1815.

[Enclosure]

27th Novr 1812

Sir,

The Service is under great obligations to you and you are entitled to an opportunity to distinguish yourself which not offering in your element you shall have one on the land.

Captn King will be with you to night with 150 men you will join him with such force of Seamen as you think proper You will together attack the enemies Batteries, Share the danger, and the honor.

He has instructions which he will communicate. When this enterprise is over I have to request that you will allow the Seamen to assist us over tomorrow. With high esteem [&c.]

(Sd) Alexr Smyth
Brig Genl

(A true Copy)
Lieut Angus

Copy, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 192.

SAILING MASTER DANIEL DOBBINS TO LIEUTENANT SAMUEL ANGUS

Erie the 2d of December 1812

Dear Sir[1]

I have been long anxiously waiting to hear from you but I suppose the Commodore has not yet arived. I am going on with one boat as you wished Me but the weather has been bad and we have had a Shelter to Make to work under which I have Completed and have one of the boats Ready to Rais A Number of workmen at this Place are Soliciting Me every day to Set them at work which I do not think Myself alltogether authorised to do with out your leave but if the boats is to be built this winter no time aught to be lost. I would have Sent you a draft but Mr Crosby has been so busy he has had no time to draw one. he has Drawn one to work by which looks well and I think will answer the purpose well we have made the one that is in the works fifty feet keel 17 feet beam and five feet in the hold if Commodore Chauncy Should not arive Soon I should be extreamly glad to get Permition of you to go down to Washington this winter during the Seting of Congress to attend to the business of the vesel I lost at detroit. if you think of giving Me Such Permition I wish you would Signify it by a line to Me I am Respectfully yours

Daniel Dobbins

Copy, NBuHi, Dobbins Papers.

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[1] This document does not include the name of the addressee, however, Dobbins mentions in a subsequent letter to Secretary Hamilton that he has yet to receive instructions from Lieutenant Angus commanding at Black Rock. See Dobbins to Hamilton, 12 Dec. 1812, NBuHi, Dobbins Papers, p. 369 below.

LIEUTENANT SAMUEL ANGUS TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Black Rock Decr 2 1812

Sir

As it appears Genl Smyth has abondon'd his Idea of crossing and their being no posibility of doing any thing here with our Vessels as the Sails cordage and &c &c are Destroy'd and the Carpenters all left here let me beg you will order me to New York untill I can get employ on the Atlantic. I shall Anxiously wait your answer. With Sentiments of highest esteem I have the honor [&c.]

Sam^{l} Angus Lieut

P S on the night of the expedition there was but one Army officer wounded a Capt. [Mindert M.] Dox

ALS, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 197.

Chauncey's Squadron in Winter Quarters

The Lake Ontario squadron returned from its blockade of Kingston harbor when winter storms and encroaching ice made navigation all but impossible. Commodore Chauncey realized that his ships were now of little use and, in fact, had become vulnerable to an attack from Canada across the frozen lake. He arranged them as best he could and wrote urgent requests for army reinforcements at Sackets Harbor. Beyond this, Chauncey had begun to worry about the next summer's campaign and was anxious to enlarge his squadron on Lake Ontario while building one on Lake Erie. The matter of procuring food for the following year was also on his mind. In order to set plans in motion, a tour of inspection of the navy's positions and personnel on Lake Erie was essential. This journey would take him first to Black Rock and then to Erie. The four letters which follow illustrate not only Chauncey's considerable problems, but also his determination to confront them.

Commodore Isaac Chauncey to
Secretary of the Navy Hamilton

Sackets' Harbor
1 Decr 1812.

Sir,

The Season is now so far advanced and the weather has become so intensely cold that it is unsafe to navigate this Lake. I shall in a few days lay up all the vessels for the winter and proceed immediately to Buffaloe and Presqu' Isle on Lake Erie to make my arrangements for opening the Campaign with vigor in the Spring. I shall make it my business to see the commanding General at Buffaloe, in order to arrange a plan of co-operation against the enemy in the spring, and on my return I will visit Major Genl Dearborn for the same purpose.

I think it my duty to state to you, Sir, the exposed situation of our little Naval Force during the winter months, and how important an encrease of the regular forces of the Army of the U.S. is at this post. Altho' I think the vessels with their crews are fully competent to protect themselves against any Attacks of Musketry, yet if the Enemy by any desperate effort should succeed in obtaining possession of the Forts in this Town, the vessels must fall of course they could not be moved for the ice.

Viewing the immense importance of the command of this Lake to the Enemy, no one can doubt but that he will make a desperate effort to regain the ascendency that he has lost, and really the accomplishment of that object is not a difficult Task to an Enterprizing officer. closed up as we shall be within about 30 miles of Kingston where the enemy can, (and most likely will) collect a force of from 3 to 4,000 men for the express purpose of destroying our naval ascendency on this Lake, he can, with great ease (after this month) cross from Kingston to Long or Grand-Island on the Ice, from thence to Gravally Point, go along the Shore to Chaumont Bay, across that Bay to this Harbor in about 12 hours as all their Troops are exercised to walk with Snow-Shoes. Now Sir suppose 2 or 3000 men cross in the way pointed out, what can save us here? Nothing but a reinforcement of Regular Troops sufficient to repel any attack that may be made upon us, and so preserve our little Fleet from otherwise certain destruction.

It may be objected to ordering Troops to this place that they will be wanted to collect at certain points for the operations in the Spring, but in answer to that I will observe that the Troops can be transported by the vessels from this place in the Spring to any point where they may be wanted with more facility than they can march. Moreover, in my humble opinion, the preservation of our vessels (consequently of our ascendency upon this Lake, without which we cannot conquer Canada), is of the very first importance.

The force at this post consists of about 500 regular Troops under Col Macomb and about 1000 militia, not more than 600 of which are fit for duty and even this number is every day diminishing by desertions, discharges, and furloughs, and I believe that the Term of Service of many of them will expire the latter part of this month. I presume that an additional force of 500 to 1000 regular Troops would ensure protection to this place. I am now building Block-Houses in conjunction with Col Macomb to guard against a Surprize.

We shall require for the service on the Lakes at least 100 more marines, and if sent on immediately they can do garrison duty until the Spring. The 100 which accompanied me under Capt Smith have all been disposed of on board of the different vessels put in commission without leaving any for the *Madison* or the vessels on Lake Erie which together will require from 70 to 80 men.

I trust Sir you will not think that I have gone beyond my duty in urging the necessity of a re-inforcement of Regular Troops at this post for the protection of the Naval Force collected here. I am so anxious upon this subject that I have written to Genl Dearborn requesting him to send a Reinforcement as soon as practicable, a copy of my letter is herewith enclosed.

As I shall from necessity be frequently absent this winter I wish the officer who may command the *Madison* may be ordered on as soon as possible in order that he may Superintend her Equipment. Three Lieutenants and a Purser will also be required for the same Ship. I have the honor to be [&c.]

Isaac Chauncey

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 200.

[Enclosure]
(Copy)

Sackets' Harbor
30 Nov 1812

Sir,

The weather has now become so boisterous that any further operations upon the Lake would be attended with difficulty, and danger of losing some of our Vessels. I have therefore come to the determination of laying them up in the course of next Week for the winter. Our next object is to preserve them against any attack that may be made upon them by the Enemy.

The Vessels themselves with their Crews are adequate to their own protection against musketry but should the enemy collect a force of 2 or 3,000 men at Kingston (which he can easily do) he could march here on the ice in 12 hours, take possesion of our own guns and turn them upon the Vessels and of course destroy them. Having accomplished that object he would return before a sufficient force could be collected to oppose him.

Viewing the immense importance that the command of this Lake is to the Enemy taken in Connection with his Intention to defend upper Canada, no one can doubt but that he will use every exertion and make any sacrifice to regain the ascendency which he has lost, and how can he accomplish that Object so easily as to collect a force sufficient at Kingston, cross to this place, burn all our Vessels and return.

I am really alarmed Sir for the safety of our little Fleet collected here & I trust you will deem their preservation of so much importance to our future operations against Canada, as to induce you to order to this post as soon as convenient 1000 additional regular Troops: the militia will not do. The force which is now here consists of about 500 regulars and 1000 militia; not more than 600 of the latter are fit for duty.

Col Macomb is enlarging Fort Volunteer and will mount some more Ship guns upon it and will erect a Block-House. I am also building a Block-House near Fort Tompkins to guard against a Surprize by the Enemy.

Genl Brown has at Ogdensburgh about 600 militia besides Capt [Benjamin] Forsyths company of Riflemen. If that post was not considered of very great importance, Capt Forsyths' rifle Company would be a great acquisition here for the purpose of manning the Block-Houses.

The Troops collected here this winter can be sent with great facility to any point that you may require them in the Spring by the Vessels.

I shall leave this in a few days for Buffaloe and Presqu' Isle on Lake Erie for the purpose of making my arrangements for the next Spring's operations. Upon my return I intend paying my respects to your Excellency for the purpose of arranging a plan of Cooperation with the Army next Spring and Summer. I have the honor to be [&c.]

Signed Isaac Chauncey

Major Genl Henry Dearborn

Copy, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 200a.

COMMODORE ISAAC CHAUNCEY TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Sackets' Harbor
8 Decr 1812

Sir,

When I arrived here, in order to secure a regular Supply of provisions to the Seamen and marines on this Station, I was under the necessity of entering into a conditional contract with Mr E. Anderson jr (the army contractor) to furnish the navy ration at 20 cents since which I find that he farms it out for 17 cents, consequently he makes 3 cents on each ration, & the presumption is that the person who furnishs the ration makes 1 or 2 cents more; there fore it would be fair to conclude that the Ration may be furnished for about 16 cents; if so, the government may as well receive the benefit as Individuals. I would, therefore, if it met with your approbation, advertise for proposals to furnish at this station good salted Beef, Pork, Bread & Whiskey-and the other component parts of a ration, for the next 6 or 12 months as you might deem most advisable: Fresh Beef can be got here for 3 or 4 cents per lb. If you should authorize me to enter into these contracts, I am persuaded that a considerable sum may be saved to the Government. At any rate I deem it my duty to make the Suggestion.[1] I have the honor [&c.]

Isaac Chauncey

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 209.

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[1] Hamilton approved of these arrangements. See Hamilton to Chauncey, 26 Dec. 1812, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 10, p. 223.

COMMODORE ISAAC CHAUNCEY TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Confidential Sackets' Harbor
9 Decr 1812.

Sir,

On the 5th inst I sent a flag of Truce over to Kingston with Mr Murney late Owner of the Sloop *Elizabeth*. My real motive in sending

Captain Isaac Chauncey, U.S.N.

this Flag over, was to gain information of the strength at that place which consists of about 600 of the 49th regiment and nearly 1000 militia: they also can call in 2000 more militia in 24 hours notice. That part of the Glengary regiment (say about 500) which was at Kingston at the time I made the attack upon The *Royal George*, finding that they could not get up the Lake by water, have marched to York by Land. The *Royal George*, *Earl Moira*, and a Schooner all loaded with Military Stores and clothing for the Army & Indians at Fort George, have made four attempts to escape from Kingston since the 20th of November but upon seeing our blockading Squadron have run back. They have now relinquished all hopes of getting up this winter and have in consequence discharged the Stores &c and laid up their Vessels. I therefore hope to have the pleasure of conducting them into Sackets' Harbor before they get another chance to get up the Lake. It is also a satisfaction to know that we have prevented The Enemy from sending to Fort George and the posts on that part of the Lake the clothing and arms that his Troops may require this winter. Mr Vaughan could not learn that the Enemy contemplated an attack upon this place this winter: on the contrary they appeared to apprehend one from us.

The information contained in this letter was obtained from an officer on board of the *Royal George* whom Mr Vaughan had known for several years and who is friendly disposed toward us: it therefore may be depended upon. We shall be prepared here at all events to give them a warm reception if they should make any attempt upon us this winter. I have the honor to be [&c.]

Isaac Chauncey

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 210.

COMMODORE ISAAC CHAUNCEY TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Sackets' harbor
12th Decr. 1812.

Sir,

All the Vessels are now laid up for the Winter and completely frozen in: in fact the Bay is frozen quite across. The fleet is moored in a line flanked by two of the Vessels which will protect them against any sudden attack of the Enemy.

I shall leave here tomorrow morning for Buffaloe to make the necessary arrangements at that place for our operations upon Lake Erie next Summer. I have the honor to be [&c.]

Isaac Chauncey

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 211.

Origins of the Lake Erie Squadron

The key figure in the construction of what was to become "Perry's Fleet" on Lake Erie was Daniel Dobbins, a master mariner on the Great Lakes, who received a sailing master's warrant from the secretary of the navy on 16 September 1812. Secretary Hamilton at that time instructed Dobbins to make immediate preparations for four "gunboats" at Presque Isle, but he required Dobbins to report to and receive instructions from Commodore Isaac Chauncey or his appointed representative at Black Rock. As earlier documents indicate, Dobbins had difficulty commencing work. First, Lieutenant Jesse D. Elliott claimed to have a superior knowledge of conditions on Lake Erie. He refused to believe that effective warships could be built and launched at Erie (see pp. 320–22). Secondly, when Elliott departed, Dobbins could get almost no information from Lieutenant Samuel Angus.

By mid-December, Dobbins was virtually beside himself with impatience. He had the workmen and the materials, but no actual authorization to commence construction. If he began on his own responsibility, he risked incurring the wrath of the department or at least the displeasure of his immediate superiors. He could also be held financially liable. On the other hand, if work on the ships did not commence, the workmen might disperse and the ships would not be ready to contend with whatever force the British had been able to gather and build on the north side of the lake. Finally, Dobbins wrote directly to the secretary to obtain permission to proceed.

SAILING MASTER DANIEL DOBBINS TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Sir

I would have Sent you long before this time Coppies of all the articles of agreement and the other Regulations Made by me but knowing the people of this Country to be poor and their liability to fail I thought I would wait to See whether they would fulfill and as Common they in Many instances have failed the papers are large that I have which is nothing but accounts and Repts and having a Calculation to go down this winter Myself if I Can obtain liberty I thought I would take them with Me the Many that I have drawed for I have laid out in the following way for the Purchase of the timber and geting out fit for hauling 900 dollallars being 200 tons for Iron 800 dollars 3 tons and a half for Coal 50 Do 1000 bushel at 5 Cents for tram work 160 dollars as pr apt [abstract] and Rest for building a Smith Shop and Smith work and building a Shelter to work in in the yard a Conciderable Sum More than the two thousand dollars which I have Regualar Recipts for in Consequence of the failure of the expedition to Canada I have Commenced building on My own footing the Commodore not having Come to black Rock this fall or winter I have not been able to get any instructions from Mr Angus who Commands farther than to Sanction an agreement Made with a Master builder. I have not been able to Make Contracts for the building that Could be Relyed on and knowing the necesity of the boats being built I have Concluded to forward them as fast as possible and if you think you will pay the bills I will warrant them Ready by the time the ice is out of the lake I have two of them on the Stocks one in frames and Lately timberred up the keel laid for the other

So much interest do I feel in prepareing to meet them on the lake next Spring that I will be willing to give Security to the united States that all the Money that Comes into My hands Shall be faithfully laid out if they Should Require it. I had an Idea when Mr Angus aproved of the Contract made with a Master builder that I would soon get orders to go on with the work but I have not heard from him since

Copy, NBuHi, Dobbins Papers. In Dobbins's hand. Written on verso: "Coppy of a letter to the Secretary of the Navy Decr 12th 1812."

Winter Comes to Lake Champlain

For Lieutenant Thomas Macdonough, the advent of winter was both a curse and a blessing. As on Lake Ontario, naval reconnaissance and action came to a halt, but that only signalled the need for spring planning. In the following letter, Lake Champlain's American naval commander reveals his knowledge of the enemy's strength and building activity. He lists the force at his disposal and states his intention to be completely ready when the time for operations returns. The British squadron on Lake Champlain, though small, was in a more advanced state in December than was the American squadron.[1]

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[1] *See Roosevelt,* Naval War of 1812, *pp. 142–43.*

Lieutenant Thomas Macdonough to Secretary of the Navy Hamilton

Shelburn December 20th 1812

Sir,

I have the honor to inform you that on the 12th of this month I laid up at this place in a secure harbour the U States Vessells on this Lake. The weather became so boisterous and the Ice Making thought it imprudent to keep out longer one of the sloops (the *Growler* commanded by Lt Smith) having a few days before been dismasted in a squall. Mr Loomis Sailing Master Mr Monteith [Walter ***Monteath***] Midshipman and Mr [George] Beale Purser, have come on, also twenty two men from New York, I am getting every thing in readiness for the Spring and trust nothing will be wanting to co-operate with the army when it gets in motion but men, to make these Vessells as effective as they might be one hundred would be necessary-which would be but a bare compliment. The enemy has at the Isle a Noix three Gun Boats carrying ('tis said) by several persons that have seen them two twenty four pounders each, and about fifty men, three sloops of about eighty tons mounting six six pounders, and a Twenty four each with about fifty men on board each sloop, and lately I have been told they are fitting out a Schooner to mount twelve or fourteen Guns, and told also well manned, however were the Vessells that we now have armed, to be manned, I think we should be able to cope with them. The Vessells that I now have are the

"Sloop *President* Mounting six collumbiards[1] and two long twelves-

"Sloop *Growler* with two twelves and four sixes and one long eighteen on a circle-

"Sloop *Eagle*, with six sixes and one eighteen on a circle-

And two Gun Boats carrying a long Twelve each; you will observe that the other three sloops are for Transports. I have the honor to be [&c.]

T. Macdonough

ALS, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 227.

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[1] Columbiad: a heavy shell gun, combining the qualities of gun, howitzer and mortar, invented by Major George Bomford, U.S. Army. It was named after the epic poem written by Joel Barlow, Bomford's brother-in-law.

The Chauncey-Angus Feud

When Commodore Chauncey arrived at Black Rock on his western inspection tour, he was in an ill humor. American defenses were in a wretched state and naval morale was at a low ebb. The U.S. Army was stationed too distant to be of much assistance in case of attack. Since Lieutenant Angus's men were unruly, Chauncey blamed Angus, and the lieutenant, not well-disciplined himself, chose to object to the commodore's judgments. Matters soon went from bad to worse; it became evident that Chauncey had a low respect for Angus's abilities as an organizer and leader of men. After an acrimonious correspondence, Angus was eventually transferred and saw duty with the Delaware Bay gunboat flotilla. Chauncey's report on Black Rock is followed by Angus's complaints of ill-treatment by his superior.

Commodore Isaac Chauncey to Secretary of the Navy Hamilton

Black Rock 25th Decr 1812

Sir

This frontier is left with less protection than its importance requires from this place to Lewis Town a distance of about 24 Miles there is not a single Sentinel. there is about 300 of the 14 Regt stationed at this place the rest of the army have gone into winter Quarters, 11 miles back from the river, therefore if the enemy should think proper to cross, spike all the Guns and destroy all our stores, there is but little to prevent them. I am erecting a Block House near the Vessels with a View to their protection and the stores belonging to the Navy Department, which I hope to preserve notwithstanding we are deserted by the Military, the People upon this frontier place so much more reliance upon the protection afforded to them by the Seamen than the Military, that if any circumstance should make it necessary to remove the Seamen; this part of the Frontier would be immediately deserted. I have the Honor to be [&c.]

Isaac Chauncey

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 218.

Lieutenant Samuel Angus to Secretary of the Navy Hamilton

Black rock Decr 27. 1812

Sir

I had on the arrival of Comr Chauncey stated to him the many dificulties I had labourd under at this place since my arival in keeping the men with in any degree of comfort and that it had been utterly impossible to keep them in that state of dicipline that was praticed on board a man of war he assented to it he visited the Navy Yard paid the men some little compliments respecting the attack on the evening of the 27 Novr and left the yard apparently well satisfied yesterday morning he again visited the yard the men where excercising with their pikes and Muskets he observed as he went along that they were both Sailors & Soldiers but unfortunately one or two of the men where abusive and noisy he got in a passion and reflected on me saying that they were in a state of D . . . d insubordination and worse than privateersmen advanced towards me and looking very angry I told him respectfully that I was sensible things were not exactly what I could wish they were, but I felt satisfied that I had done my duty and ought not to be reflected on the men where dismis'd. I ordered a man to be punished for Insolence to Lt Pettigrew Commr Chauncey check'd me before the men saying this was no time nor place to punish the man and would not suffer him to be punish'd in the maner I ordered (It has been with the greatest dificulty that I have got the men in any state dicipline from the deranged and confused State of every thing here), I remonstrated against such treatment. He obseved this is no time for paliating. I again obseved that I had been the Comg officer here for some time and ought to have discetionary power which if I was not sufferd to use and that as I found my feeling where to be wound in such a manner that I must beg leave to resign the Comd here and suffered to report myself to you he spoke with much accrimony and Said he accepted my commission. I presume you mean that Sir I obseved I did not mean my Commission that I meerly ment the Comd of this station that I had volunteerd my services here and as I found it impossible to please him that I must again beg leave for to get from under his Comd and report my self to the Honbl Secy of the Navy he refused me that request. I then observed that I must beg leave to decline duty under his Comd he arrested me and in his writen arrest says that I refused to do duty on a enemys lines when the service of every officer and man was necessary to guard against Surprize. it is very surprizeing that he should offer to accept my commission only a few hours before and then charge me with refuseing duty on enemy lines. I beg you will order me from under Comr Chaunceys comd as I am convinced that I can never do my duty under a man who was so willing to accept my commission I am still as anxious to do my duty to my beloved country as ever and have anxiously to beg that you would order me to the Sea board I have many reasons to make that request but more particularly my wouned feelings to get from under the Com of a man who in private life I shall always respect but my duty to my self as a gentleman and officer requirs that I ought to be removed from under his Comd[1] With the highest respect [&c.]

Sam^{l} Angus

ALS, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 240.

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[1] Angus experienced career difficulties from this time forward. For a sympathetic account of Angus's part in these matters, see Harold D. Langley, "Respect for Civilian Authority: The Tragic Career of Captain Angus," *American Neptune* XL, no. 1 (Jan. 1980): 23-37. For Chauncey's account of Angus's arrest, see DNA, RG45, CL, 1813, Vol. 2, No. 122, Chauncey to Hamilton, 26 Dec. 1812, and No. 121, Chauncey to Hamilton, 2 Apr. 1813.

Chapter Four

The Gulf Coast Theater: February–December 1812

In West Florida, as in East Florida, the southern frontier of the United States along the Gulf Coast bordered on lands claimed and governed by the Spanish during the years immediately before and during the War of 1812. From Pensacola to Mobile, the coast was thinly garrisoned by Spanish troops and their claim extended to the Mississippi River. Contrarily, the United States also claimed a large area of West Florida by virtue of an understanding with France at the time of the Louisiana Purchase in 1803.[1]

On 26 September 1810, a group representing Americans living in West Florida took advantage of revolutionary ferment spreading through Spain's American colonies and pronounced the formation of a republic in West Florida. This led to the United States' annexation of lands south of the Mississippi Territory, from the Mississippi River east to the Perdido River.[2] *Such was the situation when the war broke out in June 1812, and it remained unchanged until the spring of 1813 when an expedition against Mobile was mounted from New Orleans. Otherwise, from the Perdido to the Apalachicola Spanish troops garrisoned isolated outposts and exercised a tenuous sovereignty over unruly American settlers and restless Indian tribes. The principal tribes traditionally inhabiting the region were Creeks, Chickasaws, Cherokees, Seminoles, and Choctaws.*

Although the British had been ousted from the Floridas in 1783, they maintained contacts with that area through merchants at trading posts, gathering intelligence from friendly Indians and exploiting the hospitality of their Spanish allies after the commencement of the Peninsular War.[3] *The possibility of encouraging a rising of Indians against the encroaching United States did not escape British observers. During the War of 1812, such plans were developed and bore fruit. An uprising of Creeks and other Indians during 1813 and 1814 would prove to be a major distraction for American policy in the West. On the other hand, it led to the creation of effective land forces in the* *southeast which eventually came into play against the British when they finally chose to exercise a southern strategy in 1814–1815.*[4]

The two American military men most closely associated with West Florida and New Orleans after the Louisiana Purchase were U.S. Navy Captain John Shaw and Brigadier General James Wilkinson. Shaw had been the first naval commander to be sent to New Orleans after the acquisition of that city. He had established the New Orleans Naval Station and made a favorable impact on local citizens. He was replaced after two years by Master Commandant David Porter, then returned to succeed Porter in 1811.

For his part, Wilkinson was the senior American military officer present at the time of the Louisiana Purchase and took formal possession of the area for the United States. Wilkinson's reputation, however, was murky at best. It was strongly suspected that he was working closely with Spanish authorities, and was involved in encouraging Aaron Burr's conspiracy in 1805–1807. He was called away to defend himself in courts of inquiry and courts martial, but returned to New Orleans almost immediately after the outbreak of the war. Thus, the first year of the War of 1812 in New Orleans was a time of tense relations between two men whose orders were to defend the city, the state of Louisiana, and the Mississippi Territory. It may be considered fortunate that Great Britain did not choose to launch an attack on the United States up the Mississippi Valley during these first months of conflict.

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1. *Cox,* The West Florida Controversy.

2. *For documents pertaining to these events, see Clarence E. Carter, ed.,* The Territorial Papers of the United States, Vol. IX, The Territory of Orleans, 1803-1812 *(Washington, D.C., 1940): 891–909; and* ASP, Foreign Relations, *III: 394–98.*

3. *William S. Coker, "John Forbes and Company and the War of 1812 in the Spanish Borderlands," in William S. Coker, ed.,* Hispanic-American Essays in Honor of Max Leon Moorhead *(Pensacola, 1979), pp. 61–97.*

4. *Frank L. Owsley, Jr.,* Struggle for the Gulf Borderlands: The Creek War and the Battle of New Orleans, 1812-1815 *(Gainesville, Fla., 1981).*

The Status of Naval Forces at New Orleans

Captain John Shaw had only a small force at his disposal before the War of 1812 began. It was composed of some 400 officers and men, *distributed among two brigs of war and eleven gunboats. The brig* Siren,[1] *commanded by Lieutenant Michael B. Carroll, was armed with 16 24-pound carronades and manned by 60 men; likewise, the brig* Viper,[2] *commanded by Lieutenant Daniel S. Dexter, was manned by 60 men, but carried less armament, 12 12-pounders and 2 6-pounders. The gunboats were a motley collection of shallow-draft vessels, rigged either as schooners or sloops, and carried but two cannon and a variety of small arms. Although the gunboats were well-suited for navigating the shallow waters of the Mississippi delta, they were ill-suited to pursuit and attack offshore. Their primary duties were the enforcement of the embargo laws, the seizing of smugglers, and the protection of American commerce. British and French men-of-war, privateers, and pirates, some of whom were from rebellious Spanish-American colonies, frequently harassed American shipping in the Gulf of Mexico. The document which follows, contains a listing of the officers and vessels of the U.S. Navy stationed at New Orleans in early 1812.*

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[1] *Syren, 240 ton brig, was built for the navy at Philadelphia in 1803. Her first commanding officer was Lieutenant Charles Stewart, who commanded* Constitution *during 1814–1815. Syren saw duty in the Mediterranean, 1804–1806, and was laid up in Washington Navy Yard for a year. She carried dispatches to France in 1809. After 1810 she was generally referred to as* Siren.

[2] Viper, *designed as a cutter by Josiah Fox and built at the Gosport Navy Yard, was commissioned as* Ferret *in 1809, with Lieutenant Christopher Gadsden as her first commanding officer. She enforced the embargo on the Carolina and Georgia coasts during 1807–1809. Rerigged as a brig and given the name* Viper *in 1810, she sailed to New Orleans in 1811.*

CAPTAIN JOHN SHAW TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

New Orleans Feby 3rd 1812.

Sir

I have the honor herewith to enclose you a correct statement of all the Naval force, now under my command, exhibiting the particular place or places at which the several armed vessels, are at the present moment, employed for the protection of our commerce:-as also, a list of the commissioned and Warrant officers and those Acting as such, taken from the General Muster-book, of the Purser of the station; not including those attached to the Brigs *Siren* & *Viper*. Sir, I have the honor to be [&c.]

John Shaw

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 1, No. 28.

[Enclosure]

A correct statement of the distribution of the [Naval force] on the New-Orleans Station; exhibiting their weight of [metal], commanders names, number of men, and the several places at which they are Stationed-February 3rd 1812.[1]

Vessels		32 pounders	24 prs.	18 prs.	12 prs.	9 prs.	6 prs.	Howitzers	Commanders	Number of men	[Where Stationed]
Brig *Siren*			16		2				Michael B. Carroll	60	New Or[leans under repairs]
Brig *Viper*					12		2		Danl S. Dexter	60	New Orl[eans reddy for sea]
Gun Vessel	*No. 64*					1	2		John D. Henley	26	Lake [Ponchar]train
"	*No. 24*	1					2		George Merrill	27	ditto ditto
"	*No. 25*		1				2		Thos S. Cunningham	26	ditto ditto
"	*No. 23*				1		2		William Carter [jr]	28	Mob[ile Bay.]
"	*No. 58*		1				2		Chas C. B. Thompson	26	[ditto]
"	*No. 11*			1				2	Richard Dealy	28	[ditto]
"	**No. 65*					1	2		Louis Alexis	27	Barr[itaria]

"	**No. 156*		1				2		Thos Ap. C. Jones	28	ditto
"	**No. 162*		1				2		Francis H. Gregory	46	ditto
["	*No. 66*		1					2	Robert Spedden	22	in Dock]
["	*No. 27*		1				2		Jonn D. Ferris	20	ditto]
[	*No. 163*	1					2		————	25	ditto]
	No. 5		1				2		James Roney	28	New [Orleans] ready for service
	No. 22						2		John L. Dixon	21	Cu[tting Timber]

***Gun Vessels *No. 162, 156* & *65*, have, a few days [since, been ordered] to Baritaria [, in pursuit] of a collection of pirates, [who are said to] have made [arrangements,] for adopting that as [their place of] general rendezvous.

J[ohn Shaw]

ADS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 1, No. 28.

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1. This enclosure is badly deteriorated, leaving several torn sections. Except for the signature, which is conjectural, the bracketed portions have been supplied from Shaw's letterbook copy, in Shaw's hand. See Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., Naval Historical Foundation Manuscripts, John Shaw Papers, Letterbook, 18 June 1810-22 Apr. 1812.

[Enclosure]

A List of the Commissioned and Warrant-Officers and others acting as such, on the New Orleans Station Feby 3rd 1812. (exclusive of the Brigs *Siren* and *Viper*)

Names	Stations	Remarks
Benjamin F. Read	Lieut. Commt.	Died on the 27th Jany ult.
Daniel T. Patterson	Lt. Comt	
John D. Henley	Lieut! Commt.	
Louis Alexis	Lieut. Commt.	
George Merrill	Lieut. Commt.	
Charles C. B. Thompson	Lieut. Commt.	
William Carter jr	Lieut. Commt.	
Thomas Watts	Sailing Master	
George Farragut	Sailing Master	
Robert Spedden	Acting Master	
Jonathan D. Ferris	Sailing Master	
Thomas ap. C. Jones	Acting Master	
William Johnson	Acting Master	
Thomas S. Cunningham	Acting Master	
Richard Dealy	Acting Master	
Champion Wood	Acting Master	
Michael Perrault	Acting Master	
James Roney	Acting Master	
Francis H. Gregory	Acting Master	
John L. Dixon	Acting Master	
James Wells	Surgeon	
Lewis Heermann	Surgeon	
John A. Kearney	Surgeon	
William Barnwell		
George Davis	Acting Chaplain	
George Senat	Midshipman	
Isaac M'Kever	Acting Master	
Enoch H. Johns	Midshipman	
Francis B. DeBelleview	Midshipman	
Nicholas Pepe	Midshipman	
Nelson Webster	Midshipman	

James Armstrong	Midshipman	
Manuel Morales	Midshipman	
William A. C. Farragut	Midshipman	
Joseph Morales	Acting Midshipn	Late appointment
Philip Philibert	Acting Midshipn	ditto
Joseph Bausier	Acting Midshipn	ditto
Clair Lefebre	Acting Midshipn	Late appointment
Vincent Le Sassier	Acting Midshipn	ditto
Thomas L. Callender	Actg Midshipn	ditto
Erasmus Watkins	Actg Midshipn	ditto
Joseph Benet	Actg Midshipn	ditto
David C. Nicholls	Actg Midshipn	ditto
Ebenezer Cooley	Actg Surgeon	ditto
James Rodrick	Actg Master	ditto

John Shaw

ADS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 1, No. 28.

[Enclosure]

Honbl Paul Hamilton New Orleans Feby 3rd 1812

Sir

Agreeably to instructions which I have had the honor to receive from you, I have on the best letters of recommendation, introduced into the Navy Service of the United States, the following officers, viz:

	Names	Stations	date of appointment
1	Philip Philibert	Acting Midshipman	July 4th 1811
2	Joseph Morales	ditto	Decr 12th 1811
3	Erasmus Watkins	ditto	Jany 1st 1812
4	Ebenezer Cooley	Acting Surgeon	Jany 4th 1812
5	James Rodrick	Acting S. Master	Jany 12th 1812
6	Joseph Bausier	Acting Midshipman	Jany 14th 1812
7	Clair Lefebre	ditto	Jany 15th 1812
8	Vincent Le Sassier	ditto	Jany 16th 1812
9	Thom C. Callender	ditto	Jany 17th 1812
10	Joseph Benet	ditto	Jany 18th 1812
11	David Clark Nicholls	ditto	Feby 1st 1812

Messrs William Johnson and Richard Dealy have long since received their promotions as Sailing Masters; the former on the 26th and the latter on the 27th of March last, and express much solicitude to receive their Warrants from the Navy Department. With great respect I have the honor to be [&c.]

John Shaw

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 1, No. 28.

News of War Arrives in New Orleans

Secretary of the Navy Hamilton lost little time in dispatching copies of the declaration of war to Captain Shaw at New Orleans, as he had done for other station and squadron commanders. New Orleans was the most distant of the stations from Washington, but the news arrived there on 9 July, in the relatively rapid time of three weeks. Four letters follow which show how the news of war would affect naval readiness. The first one is addressed to Secretary Hamilton from New York, offering the navy a vessel which later became the U.S. ship Louisiana, *of great value during the 1814–1815 Battle of New Orleans. The second document is Captain Shaw's response to Secretary Hamilton, indicating his immediate doubts about the readiness of the station for war. The third document depicts Lieutenant Daniel Dexter's attempt to notify the brig* Siren *of the state of war. Finally, there is Louisiana Governor William Claiborne's letter which reports on naval events to the Navy Department.*

J. H. Laurence & Co. to Secretary of the Navy Hamilton

New York
July 4th 1812

Sir,

We have a very fine Coppered Ship of about 350 Tons, called the *Remittance* of New York, detained at New Orleans by the Embargo, and which we expect will remain there on account of the War, provided the news of the War reaches there before she can sail after the 4th July. This Ship is well constructed to arm, having a great breadth of beam, 2 flush decks, and is a remarkable fast sailer for a Merchantman, and should the Government require to arm any Vessels in New Orleans for the defence of the River she will be well calculated for the purpose.

Should any object of this Kind be in the view of the Government, we shall be disposed to sell this Ship at a moderate valuation, and will thank you in making such arrangements in New Orleans, if you will give a reference to her, and to her consignees Mess. Harrod & Ogdens of New Orleans in whose charge she is, with the power to sell. We have the honor to be [&c.]

J. H. Laurence & Co.

ALS, DNA, RG45, MLR, 1812, Vol. 5, No. 24.

CAPTAIN JOHN SHAW TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

New Orleans July 10th 1812

Sir,

The Act of Congress, declaring War against "the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and the dependencies thereof," reached this city yesterday morning; since which, I have dispatched boats, to the several Divisions, with information and instructions, correspondent with that occurrence.

From my former communications, to the Honl Secretary of the Navy, it will have been observed, that the force under my command, is by no means adequate to the defence of the extensive coast, which it has to guard, even against pirates and privateers, in a state of peace; and how much less so, must it be, in a time of War! In addition to the Gun boats, which have been ordered to this Station from New york, but which by the by, have not yet arrived,-I would suggest, that a few copper-bottomed Schooners, mounting, from 10, to 12, guns each, are almost indispensably necessary. Such vessels would enable us, if sent out amongst the West-India-Islands, greatly to annoy the Commerce of the enemy, on its passage from Jamaica to England.

I have to inform you, and it is with much regret that the Brigs *Siren* and *Viper* are both out;-the former will streach along the Coast, to the Westward, and will touch in, at Vera Cruz;-the latter has sailed for the Havannah, having on board, Mr Stephen Kingston, our Consul for that Port. They have both been ordered out, in consequence of, official requisitions made on me by Governor Claiborne*-The *Siren* having but very recently sailed, I have given orders, that a dispatch-boat, be immediately sent after her, to inform her of the existence of War with England. I am wretchedly off, for want of officers: my late returns exhibit the names of those under my Command.

We are well supplied with Shot, both Cannon & grape; but of Muskets and pistols fit for service, we are greatly deficient. Cannon-powder, will also be in great requisition. I had the honor to receive your circular of the 6th May,[1] to which due compliance shall be given, whenever Major [Daniel] Carmick shall call for the Marines.

I shall go on myself, to the Eastward, tomorrow, for the purpose of seeing that the several passes, leading to New Orleans, are properly guarded by the Gun Vessels:-My absence from this City, shall not exceed ten days.

Before I can close this letter, I feel impelled by the sensations, excited by the peculiarity of my situation, to assure you, that I have always been most sincerely disposed, to co-operate with the Military; and to employ, on the suggestion of the Governor, the Naval force, at the head of which, I am placed, in any case required by the public interest; and that, with this disposition, and the most ardent desire, which I have had opportunities heretofore, of demonstrating, to serve the United States with the most faithful zeal,-it operates, as the Honorable Secretary must be sensible, as a considerable dampper, on that spirit of ambition and enterprise, so essential to every service, especially in a time of War, to be placed, either directly, or indirectly, under the control of any person, holding no kind of rank in, nor in any way connected with, the Naval Service; thereby giving them an opportunity of appropriating to themselves, those laurels, to which others may be justly entitled. Should the Brigs *Siren* and *Viper* be captured, as is much to be apprehended, I shall, in common with every other individual in the community, greatly lament the loss, while, as a commanding officer, it is a subject, in which I am but little concerned. General Wilkinson arrived here, yesterday. With great respect, I have the honor to be

John Shaw

*For the *Siren*, a verbal demand

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 101.

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[1] See p. 107.

[Enclosure]

New Orleans July 10th 1812

The following Statement, exhibits the number and distribution of the Naval force under my Command, as attached to this Station.

Brigs	*Siren*	Cruising towards Vera Cruz
	Viper	Gone to the Havannah
	Enterprise	Just arrived at New Orleans
Gun Vessels	*No. 5*	Mobile Bay
	" 65	
	" 23	
	No. 24	Off the Rigolets
	" 64	
	No. 156	At the Balize & to the Westward
	" 163	
	" 162	
	" 66	
	" 27	

NB. *No. 11*, Was, on a late survey, found to be so rotten as to make it impossible to repair her; & she was condemned accordingly.

John Shaw

ADS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 101.

LIEUTENANT DANIEL S. DEXTER TO LIEUTENANT THOMAS AP CATESBY JONES

U.S. Gun Vessel *No. 162*,
Balize, July 13, 1812

Sir

Immediately on receipt of this you will proceed in Gun Vessel *No. 156*, under your command, in pursuit of the Brig *Siren*; she sailed on the 8th inst. for Vera Cruiz; and as she has orders to keep along shore, she will most probably touch, agreeable to instructions, at many places short of the port for which she is destined. I enclose you a small packet for Capt. [Lieut. Michael B.] Carrol,[1] like wise the Act declaring war. In case you should be fallen in with by the Enemy and captured, you will destroy the enclosed dispatches for Capt. Carroll. As the capture of the *Siren* at this time would be so serious a loss to the service, I feel confident that you will use every exertion to overtake her; running the coast down will be the most probable way of effecting it; and the danger of falling in with a superior force of the enemy thereby greatly diminished. Do all you can to annoy the Common enemy of our Country, and be at all times guarded against surprize: Do not suffer yourself to be deceived by any Colours. Should you not fall in with the *Siren*, you will return to this place, and report yourself to the Commanding Officer. Respectfully your's &c &c

(Signed) Dan^{l} S. Dexter

Mr. Jones, Commdg. G. V. *No. 156.*

Copy, DNA, RG45, Daniel Dexter Letterbook, pp. 8-9. In Dexter's hand.

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[1] Enclosure not found.

Governor William Claiborne to Secretary of the Navy Hamilton

New Orleans July 20th 1812.

Sir,

Since my last letter, I have had no intelligence from the *Viper* or *Siren*,-as relates to the latter vessel, I omitted in my last to inform you, that immediately on the receipt of the declaration of War, Commodore Shaw dispatched a Messenger to the Balize, with a view of preventing her departure;-But previous to his arrival, she had gone to Sea. I advised the Commodore, to dispatch a pilot Boat after her, with information of the War, & orders to return to Port with all possible dispatch, which I believe he has done.

There are several privateers, fitting out at this port, & the Citizens concerned are very anxious, that Commissions for Letters of Marque & reprisal, should be sent out.

The General Assembly of the State, will be in Session in 9 days. It is understood, that at the late election for Governor, I obtained a great Majority of the Vote of the people, & the general opinion seems to be, that the popular sentiment in my behalf, will be sanctioned by the Legislature. I am, Sir, with great respect & esteem [&c.]

William C.C. Claiborne

LS, DNA, RG45, MLR, 1812, Vol. 5, No. 158.

Supplies for the Gulf Coast

Matters of supply on the New Orleans station were unusually complex because of that city's distance from the manufacturing centers of the Northeast and the consequent time lags and increased prices created by heavy overland and river transportation charges. The usual method of obtaining needed commodities required Captain Shaw to place orders through Navy Agent John K. Smith at New Orleans. If goods were not available locally, Smith would request William Helms, the navy agent stationed at Newport, Tennessee, to place orders on establishments in the Northeast. Also, the secretary of the navy would respond to requests from the station commander, if they were substantial, by writing to Helms directly from Washington. The document which follows is of this type.

Secretary of the Navy Hamilton to William Helms

Genl Wm Helms
Newport, Tennessee

Navy Depart
8 July 1812

You will contract in the best terms in your power for the delivery at New Orleans of

One hundred tons of assorted shott
Two hundred barrels of cannon powder
Forty thousand pounds of assorted cordage &
Fifteen thousand gallons of whiskey

with respect to the shott & cordage Capt Shaw will write to you, stating particularly the kind most wanted, and You will make your contracts acordingly. of the powder one tenth part must be priming powder, the residue, cannon powder. that is 20 lbs of priming & 180 lbs of cannon powder.

For the faithfull performance of all these contracts good Security must be given:-All the articles are to be delivered at the expense of the Contractors to the Navy Agent at New Orleans. The powder & shott must be delivered within six months from your signing the contracts; and upon the contracts for those two articles you may engage to advance, one fourth of their respective amounts. The cordage & whiskey must be delivered in the course of twelve months from the date upon the contract for them no advance can be made; nor can any payment be made upon them till the appropriations for the 1813 shall be made-they will not be required for expenditures during the present year-and we have not the means of anticipating our supplies of these articles. However after the appropriations for the year 1813 shall have been made, you may engage to advance, if necessary, one fourth the amount of the contracts for cordage & whiskey. The balance as well as the balance upon the contracts for shott & powder to be paid upon the Contractors producing to you the receipts of the Navy Agent at New Orleans therefor.

Having made these contracts, you will be pleased to transmit them to this office keeping copies thereof for your government, and sending copies to the Navy Agent at New Orleans for his Government.

Paul Hamilton

Copy, DNA, RG45, MLS, Vol. 11, pp. 114-15.

The Shaw-Wilkinson Feud

Attempting to ensure that navy and army forces would cooperate to the fullest extent, Secretary Hamilton ordered Captain John Shaw to place himself under the command of Brigadier General James Wilkinson upon the latter's arrival in New Orleans. Wilkinson had spent the past year in Washington defending himself against charges that emanated

from his questionable conduct in the Burr Conspiracy (1805–1807).[1] *He was acquitted on 14 February 1812, and the War Department ordered him to return to his former post as the commanding general at New Orleans.*[2] *In early August, Wilkinson arrived at New Orleans on board the U.S. brig* Enterprise, *commanded by Lieutenant Johnston Blakeley. General Wilkinson then presented his orders to Captain Shaw, accompanied by detailed instructions to Shaw for the naval defense of the city. The following documents include: Blakeley's arrival report, Shaw's initial response to departmental correspondence delivered by Blakeley, Shaw's heated protest to Secretary Hamilton against being placed under the orders of an army commander, and, enclosed with the last, Wilkinson's correspondence with Shaw.*

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[1] *For a definitive account, see Thomas P. Abernethy,* The Burr Conspiracy *(New York, 1954).*

[2] *Wilkinson's controversial career is portrayed in Royal O. Shreve,* The Finished Scoundrel *(Indianapolis, 1933), and James Ripley Jacobs,* Tarnished Warrior: Major General James Wilkinson *(New York, 1938).*

LIEUTENANT JOHNSTON BLAKELEY TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

US Brig *Enterprize*
New Orleans 3d August 1812

Sir

I have the honour to acquaint you that agreeably to your instructions to me in may I have deposited in the public Library of this place the model of the frigate, which was entrusted to my care, in comple[te] order. Situated as I am here I am unable to refrain from soliciting your permission to return to the Atlantic States in the *Enterprize*, In making this request, a request known and assented to, by Capt Shaw I am actuated by a conviction of the little utility which would attend her operations on this station. The coast of this Country affords no encouragement to a vessel drawing as much water as ours; but its dangers and its difficulties, it apears, we will not be allowed an opportunity to test. I therefore pray you, should this meet your approbation, to order the *Enterprize* to any atlantic port you may think proper. I have the honor to be [&c.]

J. Blakeley

ALS, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 135. The previous letter, designated No. 134, is a duplicate but it contains a clerk's notation on the lower left corner "NB 30th Augt 1812 ordd to St Marys." Evidently, Secretary Hamilton ordered *Enterprise* to St. Marys immediately upon receiving Blakeley's request; see Hamilton to Blakeley, 30 Aug. 1812, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 10, p. 137.

Captain John Shaw to Secretary of the Navy Hamilton

(Duplicate)

New Orleans Augt 4th 1812

Sir,

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your several letters, with their duplicates, bearing dates of the 19th and 20th of June; and it will be perceived by a recurrence to my communications, to the Navy Department, of the 3rd Feby last, of the 11th April, of the 1st and 15th June, and of the 12th Ult.-that the information required by your circular of 20th June, acknowledged above, has, in the fullest extent, been anticipated by me; that, in those communications, I have made minute representations, of the number and condition of the armed Vessels in commission on this Station; of their incompetency to guard the extensive portion of coast assigned to them for protection, and, I may now add, particularly, of the Island and City of New Orleans, owing to its great exposure, from being vulnerable to attack, at so many different points.

On a consultation with General Wilkinson, the guarding as effectually as possible, the entrance by the way of Lake Bourgne, and the Rigolets, having been considered, to be an object of the first importance; I have ordered the Balize Division, to form a junction, at those points, with the Division of the Lakes.

The Brig *Enterprise*, is now at anchor below this City; from which, have lately been sent to the Navy-Hospital, 2 Acting Lieutenants, 2 Midshipmen, and 22 of her Crew; where they are now confined with the yellow fever; a number, which although great, is still liable to be daily augmented, from the same vessel.

The Brig *Viper*, has returned from the Havannah, since the date of my last; and requires some small repairs, before she can again proceed on a cruise. From the *Siren*, for the safety of which, I entertain considerable apprehensions, I have as yet, heard nothing.

The Security of this State, against the inroads of an invading enemy, seems, in my opinion to require, two Block-Ships to be immediately built; one to mount thirty, 32 pounder cannon, to be stationed at the principal entrance at the Balize; and the other, mounting twenty-four, 24-pounders, to be placed in the Rigolets. The Carpenters' estimates, furnished to me, on plans which I had drafted, amount to about forty thousand dollars for the two.* With these, well manned, a most powerful opposition might be made, to any probable force which might attempt to penetrate through those passes; and, should circumstances, continue to urge the necessity of such a measure, I shall hope to be justified in going immediately into it, on the concurrence of General Wilkinson; as any considerable delay, might put greatly to hazard, the safety of this State and the adjoining Territory. It is believed that they may be got ready in the course of, from two to three months.

I have this moment received a letter by express, from Lieut. Commt. [Louis] Alexis, commanding a Division of Gun Vessels off the pass of Cat-Island; stating, that a body of Indians, urged on by British agents, are collecting for hostile purposes against our settlements on the Pasgagola; where they have already murdered some of the Inhabitants, and will probably extend their depredations along the coast to the Westward of that river. Lieut. Alexis, has sent on shore, at the Bay St. Louis, from the armed Vessels, a draft of fifty men, for the protection of the affrighted inhabitants, coming in from every direction. However inadequate, as heretofore suggested, our force is, to the ends of an efficient defence; we, as officers, happy in risking our lives in the service of our Country, shall not shrink from the arduous duty, which we now anticipate. I have been greatly indisposed for a week past; and although now on the recovery, am still confined to my room. I have received no letters from the Honl Secretary since the 19th Ult. With Great respect [&c.]

John Shaw

*Exclusive of Contingencies

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 156.

Captain John Shaw to Secretary of the Navy Hamilton

New Orleans Augt 17th 1812.

Sir

I have the honor to enclose herewith for consideration the copy of a letter which I have lately received from Gen. Wilkinson, together with a duplicate of my reply;[1] and have to solicit of you a retrospective examination of the circumstances and the principles, which form the basis of this correspondence:

Motives originating, in a sense of duty towards my officers, in a respect for myself and my situation; in an unconquerable repugnance which I feel to a deviation from the antient usages of my profession, and the inevitable destruction, to every thing like order or discipline among the Naval forces intrusted to my Command, to be apprehended from such an innovation, forbid the introduction of the precedent, that a Naval Commander shall consider himself subject to the orders of a Military officer. Nothing of the kind has ever before been heard, or thought, of; no construction of the existing laws, or of my orders from the Navy-Department, can justify me in fixing on the naval Service so dangerous and so degrading a precedent. I consider myself subject to such orders, and to such only as come to me, either-directly from the Navy-Department, or from a Naval officer senior to myself in rank.

By your orders to me dated May 20th I am particularly and plainly instructed that on the requisitions of General Wilkinson, I am to co-operate with him, with the force under my command in all objects that may be undertaken for the public good:[2] This order which ought to be and which I presume is reciprocal between the Naval and Military forces. I shall on every occasion which may offer, execute with that promptitude and pleasure with which every good officer performs the duty which he owes to his country. I am persuaded, however that officers of the army, would not submit to orders from those of the Navy, whatever their respective rank might be; nor can I suppose that Naval commanders will consider themselves subject to orders from the Military, unless they shall receive plain, unequivocal and positive instructions to that effect, from the honorable Secretary of the Navy: Such a measure, altogether, I trust, as unnecessary, as it would be unprecedented I flatter myself, will never be adopted. For however eminently skilled a military officer may be-in the profession of arms, if he be arrayed in the amphibious garb of a Naval-Military Commander, he will, in acting under it be much less likely to ac-

Major General James Wilkinson, U.S.A.

quire laurels than to bring disgrace on himself and the service in which he may be employed. In a word, the Military know nothing about naval affairs; and why therefore should a General of the army, be placed in the situation of a nominal commander of Naval forces, merely to give him credit for incidental achievements, in which, as he cannot know how to direct them he can of course take no conspicuous part. The propriety of these remarks, will appear the more obviously if it be considered, that the South-Western portion of our Maritime frontier depends chiefly or almost solely on the Naval forces of this Station for defence; as an invading enemy cannot approach the Military fortifications with vessels of war. Of course our Naval force would have to fight on their own element, where the Military could not so much as be spectators. If for reasons however, which I am not able to comprehend, it should be judged expedient to place me as the Senior Naval officer on the station subject to the orders of any Military officer, I must beg of the Honorable Secretary to be recalled and to be placed according to my rank in the service, on board of such Frigate as he may think proper to assign me.

The block-Ship contemplated to be built for the defence of the Rigolets, is now under consideration, which I have proposed to lay down and have built at, or in the vicinity of the Bay St Louis, and as the timber will be procured from the woods by the men belonging to the Service, the whole expense will not exceed, perhaps, from fifteen to sixteen thousand dollars, considerably less than formerly suggested.

I have carefully examined two ships, and have recommended the purchase of one of them called the *Remittance*, as one of those intended for the defence of the Balize. We are truly unfortunate with our men, there being at this time 102, on the Hospital returns. The cases however are of a much less malignant cast, than those of the last season–we have as yet buried but few.

The British ship of war, *Brazen*–of 28 guns, was at anchor off the Balize, on the 10th instant; at which time a Frigate and another Sloop of war, were cruising to the Eastward. As there are still some hopes of the *Siren*'s getting in, I have judged it expedient to draft from the Gun boats, men sufficient to fill up the crew of the *Enterprise*, which for some time past has been lying at anchor, with a number of her men in the Hospital. She goes immediately to the Balize in order to co-operate with the *Siren* on her return, in an attack on the British Ship should an opportunity be afforded. In order to protect the mouth of the River, a battery mounting 12 heavy guns, will, in my opinion be preferable to the block-ship mentioned in my last.

General Wilkinson has required three of our best equipped gun Vessels to return again to Mobile Bay, from whence they had recently been withdrawn–for the purpose of keeping out the British from that quarter; which, in the event of an attack will most certainly, unless aided by a battery on shore, fall a sacrifice to the measure.

The whole force now here, consists of 2 Brigs, the *Enterprise* and *Viper*, and 9 Gun Vessels, Viz: *Nos 162, 163, 66*, and *No 27*, at the Balize; and *Nos 5, 23, 24, 64*, and *65*, between Cat Island and the Rigolets: *No 156*, commanded by Mr Thomas ap. C. Jones, dispatched on the 10th ult in quest of the Brig *Siren*, has not yet been heard from. A large re-inforcement of Gun Vessels, appears to me indispensable for the defence of this coast.

Mr Smith, the Navy-Agent has been in a bad state of health for a considerable time past; which has been the case with myself also, for four or five weeks. I am now however in a state of convalescence, have much arduous duty before me, and few officers to take a hand in it. Should it be found absolutely necessary, I shall appoint some more acting Masters, and increase the number of Acting Surgeons; in doing which, and in the performance of all other duty, I must again assure you, that the best exercise of my judgement will be used with a single eye to the interest and honor of the public Service.

In compliance with your order of the 8th ult. I have written Gen. Helms, Navy-Agent, residing at Newport Tennessee on the subject of Shot powder &c:–& I have just received yours of the 16th ult to which due attention shall be given. I have as yet received no orders from the Navy-Department on the subject of the increase of expenses, incident to a State of War, nor information, how far I may be at liberty to act in cases of immergency, without precise and specific instructions from the Honorable Secretary. With great respect, I have the honor to be [&c.]

John Shaw

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 179.

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1. Shaw's reply, dated 11 Aug. 1812, may be found enclosed with Shaw to Hamilton, 17 Aug. 1812, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 171.

2. See Hamilton to Shaw, 20 May 1812, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 10, p. 41, right hand side. Letterbook contains two pages numbered 41.

[Enclosure]
Private Official

Head Quarters
New Orleans. August 7th 1812.

Sir

I beg leave to call your immediate attention to the following requisitions, which are deemed indispensable to the defence of this Capital and the adjacent Territory; and I trust that every exertion compatable with sound Œconomy may be made to carry them into prompt Effect, delays being dangerous in the Present state of affairs.

Your Battering Cannon should all be mounted and Equipt for Service with the utmost dispatch.

Two Small fast sailing Vessels must be purchased and manned to reconnoitre the Coast from the Chandelier Islands to the Bar of Pensacola Bay, and from thence to keep up a communication with this City by the Lakes.

A Suitable Vessel must be purchased to form a heavy floating Battery at the mouth of the River to defend that point in Co-operation with the *Enterprize*, the *Viper*, and *Syren* should she return; This floating battery should be armed, Equipt & manned and take her Position as soon as possible, and the other Vessels should be ordered to the same station without a moments unnecessary delay.

You will be pleased to have as suitable Vessel in readiness to Sail on Tuesday the 10th Instant under a Competent Officer with an Engineer whom I have Employ'd for the Purpose, to ascertain the Communications of Lake Borne with the Gulph, and to make a suvey of the passes of Cat Island, & Christian, and the Rout from thence to Pearl River, and the Regulets. The Crew will of course be properly found & provisioned for the Service.

The three Gun Boats required for Mobile Bay, are intended to defend that Station against the Entrance of any foreign Vessels, armed or charged with arms or military Stores of any Kind, and I trust no obstacle may intervene to prevent their reaching their Destination as soon as may be. This Command being an highly interesting one, I will recommend that it should be Confided, to an Officer of Experience, discretion and Intelligence, who is to keep you, and also the Commanding Officer at the Pass of Christian regularly advised by Express of every occurrence worthy of note.

Should this little Squadron find itself menaced by Superior force, before the necessary plan of Co-operation can be carried into Effect, it must retire into Shoal-water and there defend itself with the Characteristic Courage of the Navy of the United States, untill it may receive Succour from the Troops, with a detachment of Artillery which your Officer is hereby authorised to require from the Commanding Officer at Fort Stoddart who will be held in readiness for this Service.

A heavy floating Battery to bear 18 or 20 Twenty four pounders is deemed necessary to assure the defence of Mobile Bay in the Progress of the War.

Will you be pleased to give me your Ideas of the most Oconomical, Prompt & Effectual Plan, on which such a Battery may be built.

To obviate any misunderstanding and to authorise your Conduct, I think it necessary to transmit you under Cover a Transcript of my Instructions received from the President of the United States under date of the 15th of April, and to prevent any derangement or distraction of the force under your Command, it is Indispensible that you should consider yourself subject to my requisitions and orders only, otherwise my Plans may be disconcerted and our Co operation destroy'd

With Consideration & Respect I have to the honor to be [&c.]

Jas Wilkinson

Captain J. Shaw
United States Navy
Commanding the New Orleans Station

(True copy from the Original)

Copy, DNA, RG45, AF 8, 1812.

[Enclosure]

Extract from the orders of the President of the United States to Brigr General Wilkinson dated the 15th April 1812.

"You will be pleased to make such disposition of the Troops, and such arrangements respecting the fortifications, arms, ordinance, arsenals, military and other stores, as well as of the naval force as your own Judgement may Suggest"

A True copy from the original New Orleans, Head Quarters August 7. 1812

(Signed) James Wilkinson

Copy, DNA, RG45, AF 8, 1812.

Contact with the Enemy

The first contact report sent in by U.S. naval forces at New Orleans is contained in the following letter from Lieutenant Daniel Dexter to Captain Shaw. Dexter was in command of a division of gunboats at the Balize, near the mouth of one of the passes of the Mississippi. H.M. sloop Brazen *appeared and made a nuisance of herself, but she was not brought to action. Several days later, she and all of the vessels on the New Orleans station were caught up in a tremendous hurricane.*

Lieutenant Daniel S. Dexter to Captain John Shaw

U.S. Gun Vessel *No. 162*, Balize, 10th August, 1812.

Sir,

I have the honor to inform you that an English Sloop of War mounting 28 guns, (32pd Carronades) hove in sight yesterday morning, and came to an anchor off the Bar about 12 O'Clock. She is called the *Brazen*, Capt. Stirling.[1] A pilot boat went out, thinking her to be a merchant man, and after being detained several hours, was permitted to return, with five of the crew of the American Ship *Beaver*, captured by the *Brazen* last Tuesday bound from the Havana to this place. They report that there is a Frigate (said to be the *Cambrian*) and an 18 gun brig off the coast, about 60 miles to the Eastward; and that it is the intention of the enemy to lay off the mouth of the Mississippi in wait for several American merchantmen expected from the Havana, of whom they had information from the *Beaver*.

For further particulars, I beg leave to refer you to Mr Scrivner, the gentleman who is so good as to become the bearer of this letter, and who has been a prisoner on board the English sloop of War.

Last night she made an attempt with her boats to cut out two privateers (one American and the other French) lying to the northward of pass au L'Ottre, but, as we heard no firing, and one of the privateers being in sight this morning, Close in shore, we must conclude that the enterprize was not executed.

The Brig *George Washington* is ashore on the Bar, and I have dispatched my boats to assist in getting her off, and towing her in.

The wind having been invariably ahead since I received your last instructions, I have not been able to get out of this place.

Should the Sloop of War again come to an anchor near the bar, and it proves calm, I shall attack her with the three boats I have here, provided I am not reinforced before such opportunity offers.

Inclosed is a report of the effective force & equipment of the squadron under my Command.[2] I have the honor to be [&c.]

(Signed) Dan^l^ S. Dexter

Capt. John Shaw,
Comdg Naval Officer, N. Orleans

Copy, DNA, RG45, Daniel Dexter Letterbook, p. 14. In Dexter's hand.

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1. A sloop of war rated at 18 guns, based on Jamaica station.
2. Enclosure not copied in letterbook.

Hurricane Damage

Just as Captain Shaw was attempting to set his small naval force on a war footing, a devastating hurricane struck the Mississippi delta. The 19 August hurricane was the worst experienced there in years. It set back military preparations many months, with great material damage and some loss of lives, as detailed in the reports which follow. The first is Captain Shaw's, written only four days later. Following this account are two from Lieutenant Daniel Dexter who provides a vivid descrip-

tion from the perspective of a gunboat division commander. Reports such as these afford an appreciation of the weakness of the naval forces on the New Orleans station and show how vulnerable they were to natural catastrophes. A fourth document contains Secretary Hamilton's reaction to news of the storm which had reached Washington before Shaw's report. In this instance, the secretary, through his chief clerk Charles Goldsborough, shows himself entirely sympathetic to Shaw's distress and authorizes wide discretion in rebuilding the station flotilla, including the procurement of two blockships.

Captain John Shaw to Secretary of the Navy Hamilton

New Orleans August 23rd 1812

Sir,

I greatly deplore the necessity I am under of communicating to you, the calamitous condition of the small naval force attached to this station-of the City of New Orleans-and, as I presume, of the surrounding Country; produced on the afternoon and night, of the 19th instant, by a hurricane (from the N.E.) which, both in violence and duration, exceeded any thing of the kind, within the recollection of the oldest inhabitant of the country:

The Brig *Enterprize*, which, by considerable exertion, I had got fully manned, and which was on the very eve of dropping down to the Balize, was driven ashore, high & dry; but fortunately, however, without loss of lives, and with little or no injury to her hull: The relaunching of her, the bottom being a soft mud, will, I am apprehensive, be attended with considerable difficulty and consumption of time. The Brig *Viper*, also in Port, undergoing some slight repairs, was completely unrigged, and, with the loss of her bowsprit, mainmast, and guns, completely cut-down, fore and aft, to her waterways: This was occasioned in part by the extreme violence of the gale, and partly by the accidental circumstance of three or four large Merchant vessels running foul of her. Gun Vessel *No. 64*, commanded by Mr William Johnson, was stranded in Lake Ponchartrain, within about half a mile of Fort St. Johns: The lives of none of her crew, however, were lost, nor has she received much injury; but as she has been forced, by the violence of the tempest, over an extensive level shallow mud bottom, we anticipate much trouble in getting her off again. The Ship *Remittance*, which had just been purchased for service as contemplated when I last wrote you, has received but little, or no injury. The Ketch *Etna*, which had for some time previously been employed as a sheer-hulk; being driven from her position, by several large Merchant vessels, sunk, and had Two men drowned. The Navy-hospital, had one half of its roof carried away, and the Kitchen and other appendant buildings, blown down; and as it contains upwards of an hundred patients, it appears indispensably necessary, that it be immediately repaired. I feel much anxiety for the fate of the Brig *Siren*, which as I had heard had just got in and was at anchor off Ship-island, as well as for that of the Gun Vessels at, and in the vicinity of, the Bay of St. Louis, and at the Balize; from none of which, have we as yet, had time to receive any intelligence.

In the Arsenal-yard, much injury has been sustained: The Sail-makers loft and the joiners shop, both under the same roof, as also the office, and the pursers Store-room, two seperate apartments in another building, were blowed down. In short the injury sustained to the Naval Service, by the hurricane, cannot be repaired at a less expense, than from twenty to thirty thousand dollars.

The Military has also sustained much injury: The Barracks are for the most part, unrooffed; and a brick-wall of considerable height, fronting them and the parade-area, and making a part of that, by which the whole were enclosed, was entirely demolished. The losses of a more private and individual character, are incalculable: The Market-house, which, in point of spaciousness and elegance, was perhaps equaled by scarcely any in the United States, was completely leveled; and under the ruins of which several, perhaps many, persons, were buried, who had sought shelter from the storm. Many of the houses in the City and Suburbs, perhaps upwards of an hundred, were destroyed, and a still larger number, were unroofed: Indeed, the devastation which presented itself to the view, on the suceeding morning, appeared well calculated to produce a solemn, unaffected gloom on the countenances of the inhabitants of the country; and to attune their hearts to the "humiliation & prayer," for which, by the President's Proclamation, the day had been set apart.

The subject of my last communication being one which lies near my heart, and which is, in my opinion, of the greatest importance to the well-being of the Service in which I have the honor to hold a commission, I hope to be pardoned for again adverting to it, and, in the most respectful manner, soliciting such orders and instructions, in reply, as shall enable me with certainty to pursue, without any apprehension or danger of mistaking, my duty, such as shall clearly point out and define the nature of the situation and command in which I am placed; and by which I shall learn whether or not, after having for twenty-two years, sustained the character of a Seaman, and more than half of that time, that of a Naval officer, I am now to consider myself, as having found my way and sorely against my will too–into the army. No officer will go greater lengths than I will to serve my country; I am ready, with all my heart and soul, to cooperate with Gen. Wilkinson, or with any branch of the Government, in the execution and support of its laws–in which I should consider myself as fully discharging my duty as an officer, and which certainly ought to satisfy the General: But no; nothing but being directly under his orders, as well as subject to his requisitions, will serve his purposes; but to which I cannot submit, without direct orders to that effect from Government through its regular and legal organ, the Honorable Secretary of the Navy; to whom alone, and the senior Naval officers in the Service, do I owe obedience. According to the principles which the General is desirous of establishing, and the arrangements he wishes to adopt, the naval as well as the Military appropriations,, must be subject to his control; or in other words, he would possess the Command over, and allow me to be responsible for, that portion of the Naval appropriations, allotted to this station. Should the Naval Commg officer in this quarter, be necessarily subjected to the command of the Military (from which I can anticipate nothing but a chaos of confusion) I must beg leave to repeat the request which I made in my last, of being removed from my present, and of being placed in the command, of a Frigate, where I shall not fear to meet the "tug of war." I wish to seek honorable employ, and to continue to perform those duties, incident to that, in which I commenced.

From a full view of the peculiarity of my situation, arising from the circumstances insisted on; I am persuaded Sir, that you will not be disposed to construe any of the foregoing remarks into a disrespect for the head, or for any of the Departments of the Government, than which, nothing can be more remote from the sentiments of my heart. With great respect [&c.]

John Shaw

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 194.

Lieutenant Daniel S. Dexter to Captain John Shaw

U.S. Gun Vessel *No 162*, August 23, 1812.

Sir,

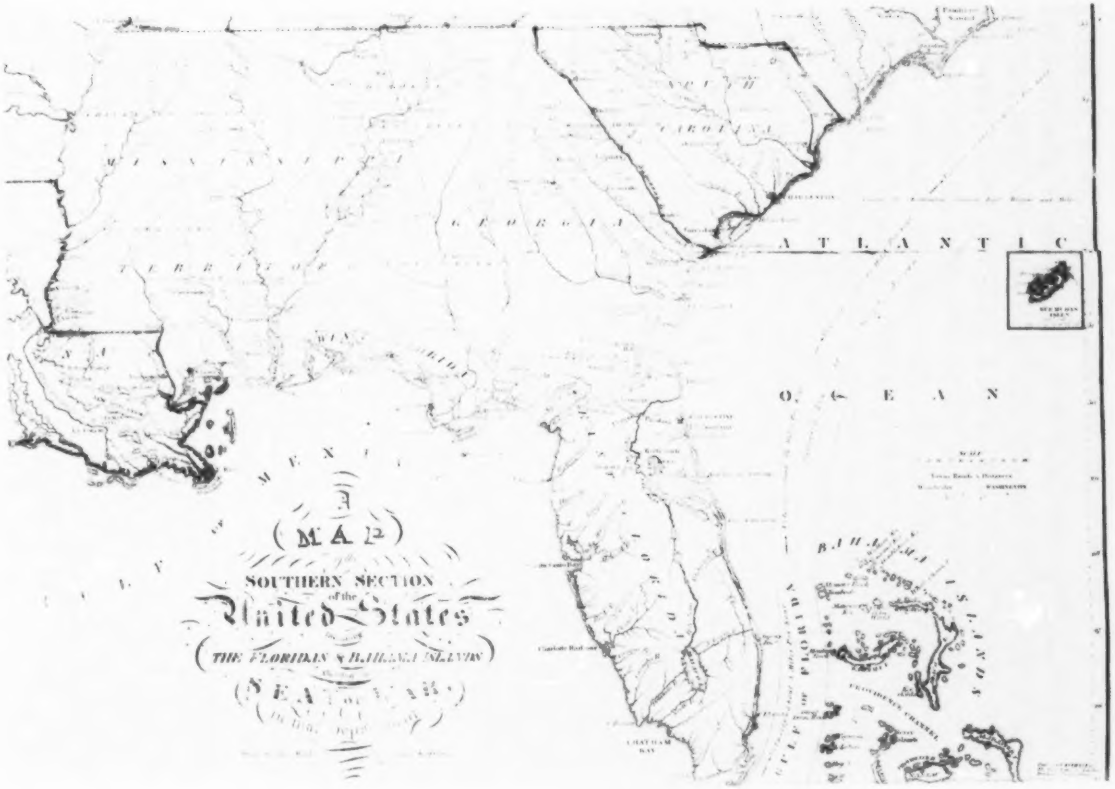
In pursuance of your order of the 2nd instant I sailed from the Balize on the 15th, in company with Gun Vessels *Nos 27*, *66* and *163*. On the 17th we came to anchor between the Free Mason's Keys, and the North Chandellies Islands, the N. Changelies bearing N.N.E.

On the 19th got under way, but came too again soon after, expecting, from appearances, a heavy gale from the Eastward. At 5 o'Clock P.M. the storm commenced, for which we had made every preparation, letting go our second anchor, striking yards and topmast, &c.

On the 20th at 1/2 past One, P.M. the tempest having increased to an almost indiscribable degree of fury, we parted one starboard cable, and lost our large Cutter; at 3 parted the starboard Cable & kept away before the wind, until we had time to bind the remaining parts of our cables to the two six pounders, and get them overboard; which, together with the kedge, which was let go at the same time, brought her up. At the time of parting our best bower Cable, we also lost our green Cutter, leaving us entirely destitute of small boats.

At 8 o'Clock, the gale still continuing with unabated fury, we lost our kedge and hauser, from which time we kept gradually dragging until 10, when the starboard Cable, with one of the six pounders, parted again; between 12 and one, the wind shifted to S.S.W. and shortly after to S.E. and continued to blow a most tremendous gale, before which we drove with great velocity; our larboard cable and six pounder not keeping her head to wind; and not being able from the violence of the tempest; to show the least sail.

In this situation we continued until nearly day light, when we discovered by her swinging, that the larboard cable was gone; and in a moment after she struck, broadside on, but by running up one of the head sails instantly, and putting the helm hard up, she payed off, and was prevented from being knocked down on her beam ends; and the ground being soft, as the swell raised her, she gradually chopped round, until right before the wind, when we hauled down the foresail and let her remain in that situation till day light; when we found she had worked herself so firmly into the Bank, that, though the water fell and left us high and dry by ten oClock, she still stood out upon her keel, not having received the smallest damage in her hull. From where we are ashore, Cat Island bears N and by E. distant


A
MAP
of the
SOUTHERN SECTION
of the
United States
including
THE FLORIDAS & BAHAMA ISLANDS
shewing the
SEAT of WAR
GULF OF MEXICO
ATLANTIC
OCEAN
SOUTH
CAROLINA
GEORGIA
MISSISSIPPI
TERRITORY
FLORIDA
BAHAMA ISLANDS
GULF of FLORIDA
PROVIDENCE CHANNEL
CHATHAM BAY
Charlotte Harbour
BERMUDAS ISLES
SCALE
WASHINGTON

3 1/2 Leagues. I have sounded with Mr [Midn. Thomas S.] Cunningham's Boat, and find 8 feet water, only one Cable's length astern; and am under the impression that the vessel may be got off without much difficulty, provided anchors and cables &c with a vessel to tighten her was sent to me soon.

I send this by Mr Cunningham's small boat, which he sent over from Cat Island. He informs me that he parted both cables shortly after I did, and slung his two six pounders, by which he rode till day light, when seeing land directly under his lee, having lost one of his cables and guns, and the other not being sufficient to keep him off shore, he was obliged to cut it away; and stood in under his jibb and reefed trysail for Cat Island, when he came too with several pieces of kentlege slung to a hauser, the gale having abated. He represents his vessel to be in a very crippled condition, having carried away all his running rigging, &c.

This gale has been one of the most violent I have ever experienced in this Climate, and I am apprehensive has done more damage than we are at present aware of. Gun Vessel *No 27* was seen yesterday standing in for Ship Island; but I am fearful *No 66* is lost, not having seen nor heard any thing of her. Some vessel is ashore on the Freemason's Keys or Chandalies Islands, as we have heard guns very distinctly from that quarter yesterday and the day before. Several vestiges of wrecks have drifted ashore near us, which proves that the damage has been extensive. I have the honor to be [&c.]

(Signed) Dan^{l} S. Dexter

Commodore Shaw Bay St. Louis

Copy, DNA, RG45, Daniel Dexter Letterbook, pp. 16-18. In Dexter's hand.

LIEUTENANT DANIEL S. DEXTER TO CAPTAIN JOHN SHAW

U.S. Gun Vessel *No 162*, 4th Sept. 1812.

Sir,

Your letter of the 31st ultimo has been received, and for the intimation it contains of your intention to confer on me the command of the 20 gun ship you are fitting out in new Orleans, I have to return you my grateful acknowledgments. For these several days past I have expected the pleasure of seeing you at this place; but, concluding that your visit might have been prevented by business of more importance, I have deemed it proper to give you a detail of the measures I have taken to get this vessel off, and the prospect I still have of being able to effect it.

Since the date of my last letter by Mr Cunningham, I have used every exertion, and put in practice every method in my power, to effect that so wished for object; but, as yet, without success. A trench has been dug from her stern down to the water's edge; the earth all taken out from underneath her except what is barely necessary to keep her erect, and impty water casks lashed under her bottom to assist in raising her; all the anchors I could procure have been carried out; a kind of capstone or crab has been made, of considerable power, and other strong purchases rigged; and with the assistance of the crews of the two Gun Vessels here, we have, every high tide for these 8 or 10 days past, made an attempt to start her, but without effect. We hove home the *Siren*'s stream anchor, and the one sent me from the Bay; took them out again, and backed one of them with the Small bower anchor of *No 156*, and the other with a kedge and several pieces of kentledge, and at last, parted the *Siren*'s Cable, without moving her.

I fear all of our efforts will be vain, until the next spring tides, unless we should be favoured with a strong wind from the Southward and Eastward, for eight or ten hours, which would without doubt raise the water so that we could heave her off with ease. We have, now, at high water, 3 1/2 feet water forward and aft, in the trench we have dug, though the tide does not rise as high now, by a foot and a half, as it did at the time I wrote the last. That foot and a half, would at this time, with the assissistance of the water casks, raise her so that we could heave her off with very little difficulty.

The *Flying-fish* Schooner, (a fisherman) from Bayou St Johns, came in here last night from Britain [*Breton*] Island, which she left the night before last. The crew of her inform me that the day before yesterday, they saw a cutter and a very large Barge, full of armed men, in a small bay at Britain Island. That as soon as they saw the *flying fish*, they all made for their boats, and the fisherman, supposing them to be Englishmen, made the best of their way back to this place. They saw no large vessel in the offing, to which the boats could have belonged.

I should have dispatched one of the Gun Vessels here in pursuit of them, had not the wind came out from the Eastward; and wanting the assistance of the Crews to improve the first favourable opportunity of heaving off, I was induced to delay it, at least for a few days. I have the honor [&c.]

(Signed) Dan^{l} S. Dexter

Com. John Shaw,
Comdg. Naval Officer, New Orleans.

Copy, DNA, RG45, Daniel Dexter Letterbook, pp. 18-19. In Dexter's hand.

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON TO CAPTAIN JOHN SHAW

John Shaw Esqr
Comg Naval Officer: N Orleans

Nav: Dep'mt
25 Sep. 1812

We have not heard from You, since the 17. ulto Letters however have been received from new orleans which state, that the public vessels & gunboats, on that station, have sustained the most serious injury, by a Tornado on the 19. & 20th: & the object of this letter, is, to authorise You to make every necessary provision to supply the place of any boats, that may have been lost, & to defend the Water passes to new orleans.

A competent force, must be provided, without delay. If the gunboats can be repaired, let it be done without delay; If they cannot be repaired, You are authorised to purchase suitable vessels, if in Your power, & fit them up: for carrying guns-& in fitting them You will use all the good materials of the gunboats to save expense. If the gunboats cannot be repaired, & You cannot purchase vessels to answer the purpose, Your next, & only alternative will be I presume, to build-But this I apprehend You will not be able to do in time: under these circumstances, & considering your great distance from the seat of Government, You will consult with general Wilkinson & the Navy Agent, & either repair the Boats, or purchase or build others, as may be in Your power, & as the good of the Service may suggest the object being to provide an adequate defence with every possible expedition & on the best possible terms. You may, should it be judged absolutely necessary, fit up, or procure twenty boats, calculated to carry, one to two guns each. If such boats could be hired, at a reasonable rate, & valued by distinterested competent judges, & the United States to pay for them, at such valutation, in the event of their being destroyed, or captured by the Enemy. it would be, a more desirable arrangement than any other exception that of repairing the boats should they be worthy of repair: but it is hoped, that a less number than 20 Boats will be sufficient with the two Blockships, which You were authorised to procure by my letter dated a few days since.[1]

for P Hamilton
Chas: W Goldsborough

Copy, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 10, p. 164.

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[1] See Hamilton to Shaw, 5 Sept. 1812, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 10, p. 141.

The Marines at New Orleans

A relatively small detachment of marines was on duty at New Orleans under the command of Major Daniel Carmick, who served on this station throughout the war and saw action in the Battle of New Orleans during December 1814—January 1815. The following documents include two from Lieutenant Colonel Commandant Franklin Wharton to Major Carmick, and three from Carmick to the commandant which concern matters typical of Marine Corps interest at that time. They were concerned about the need for more recruits, the need for improved disciplinary measures, and the ordering of winter uniforms. There was an expressed desire for action against the Spanish at Mobile and Pensacola to preclude the British seizure of those places, and considerable concern over Brigadier General Wilkinson's ordering marines to duty with the army. This concern was perfectly stated in Wharton's letter of 1 October 1812: "We have rights which ought to be known & established to make the Corps what it ought to be, one thing is most certain, we cannot belong at the same time to the departments of War & Navy."

LIEUTENANT COLONEL COMMANDANT FRANKLIN WHARTON, U.S.M.C., TO MAJOR DANIEL CARMICK, U.S.M.C.

Circular

H.Q. of the Marine Corps,
Washington, June 21st 1812

Sir!

The recruiting Service for the Corps having greatly decreased, if not altogether ceased, from the Inducements by the recruiting officers of the Army, it has been found expedient to offer a Bounty to those who will in future Join us, you are in consequence thereof authorized to allow for each able bodied Man, regularly pass'd by a Surgeon, the Sum of Twenty Dollars, Ten of which he will receive at Inlistment & the balance, Ten, at his being reported at H:Quarters, fit for duty, or, in case he should not be there Sent, at the time he is so reported by the officer Inlisting, or Commanding him at the posts. I am respectfully, [&c.]

Franklin Wharton

P:S. That Imposition may be no longer practised by desertion I deem it proper that the Recruit Should know of a Deserter here under sentence of Death which will assuredly follow Capitol Cases Since the Corporal punishments has by Law been done away.

Major Daniel Carmick,
Commandg Marines,
New Orleans.

Copy, DNA, RG127, CMC, Letters Sent.

MAJOR DANIEL CARMICK, U.S.M.C., TO LIEUTENANT COLONEL COMMANDANT FRANKLIN WHARTON, U.S.M.C.

New Orleans 20th July 1812

Lieut. Colo. Wharton

Sir,

I am in receipt of your letters of the 16th & 21st June, the latter authorising a Bounty of twenty dollars to be paid to the Recruit, the inducement held out here by the recruiting officer of the Army are still so much more advantageous that I cannot promise myself much success, Inlisting for Eighteen months only, will no doubt obtain men but should the War last longer it will be a distructive measure for the Government indeed they can hardly be disciplined in that time, The officer recruiting here has secured what men we can expect down this year, as the sickly season is commencing all those who could, have made their escape, I hope the vessels on board of which is the Clothing may arrive safe which is very doubtful, the situation of our Port is such that a single vessel of War can blockade the mouth of the River.

I would recommend the clothing being sent by the way of the Ohio during the continuance of the War & beg leave to suggest the necessity of sending the Winter clothing to Pittsburgh in time, that it may be shipped for this place before the Navigation is impeded by the Ice. The Commissions have been received & accepted of by the Young creoles.

We are anxiously waiting for orders to take Mobile & Pensacola, should the English get possession of the Port of the latter place, we will not be able to dispossess them, the advantage to them & the disadvantage to us is incalculable, my voice would be to attack it immediately, but the Genl will in future be cautious how he exceeds orders which is not to be wondered at, when we recollect the prosecution he has undergone for a like act.

Accept Sir my thanks for the papers you were so polite as to send me. Yours Respectfully

Dan Carmick

ALS, DNA, RG127, CMC, Letters Received.

MAJOR DANIEL CARMICK, U.S.M.C., TO FIRST LIEUTENANT SAMUEL MILLER, U.S.M.C.

Lieut. Samuel Miller
Adj. M. Corps

New Orleans 6th July [*August*] 1812

Sir,

I have received your letter transmitting the order which prohibits the infliction of Corporeal punishment by Stripes of Lashes, it is Sincerely to be wished that our Goverment may succeed in disciplining our Soldiers without resorting to that degrading mode of punishment, no nation but the French ever have & they Substitute Death in its place, which we have not done, It appears that it is left to the discretion of Commandg. Officers & Courts Martial to invent modes of Punishment which may degrade the Soldier perhaps more than inflicting Stripes. In this Country I discover that when I confine men they very frequently commit Suicide, or become so debilitated that their consitutions are very much impaired as well as their minds. I am at a loss to know what kind of Punishment to adopt. Perhaps the new Levies are such good Patriots they will require none, but I am doubtful whether we can get along with the old ones without some kind of punishment.

The Commissions you forwarded came to hand by last Mail.

I transmit the Muster Roll of the Marines for the month of June.

The Brig *Enterprise* is in the River I expect Genl Wilkinson will be in town to day. Yours respectfully

Dan Carmick

ALS, DNA, RG127, CMC, Letters Received. 1st Lieutenant Samuel Miller was acting commandant of the marines in Wharton's absence.

Major Daniel Carmick, U.S.M.C., to Lieutenant Colonel Commandant Franklin Wharton, U.S.M.C.

New Orleans 31st Aug. 1812

Lieut. Colo. Wharton
Sir,

Since I last wrote you we have heard of the fate of the flotilla.

One Gun boat lost & two up in the Weeds. The Brig *Syren* is safe who had been chased into the Pass of Christian by a British Frigate but two men have been lost one Seaman and one Corpl of Marines, two more marines have floated up out of the Shear hulk *Etna*.

Be pleased to inform me in your next whether I am to pay the new appointed officers here from the date of their Commissions or from the date of their acceptance thereof.

I find myself at present some what singularly situated with respect to my standing with the army & beg leave to ask your opinion on the subject, Whether I am to consider myself subject to the orders of any officer of the army superior in Rank, who may happen to be on this station, or whether it is at my own discretion to accept of a Command that may be offered me, without violating your orders. It appears there is a misunderstanding between Como Shaw & Genl Wilkinson on that subject the former will not acknowledge himself subject to the orders of the latter. The authority the Genl has produced from the Secy of War appears to me to give him full command of both Army & Navy, but the letter to Como Shaw from the Secy of the Navy directs that he shall cooperate only, my situation is different, altho I am in the Navy, I am Subject to do duty on shore with the Army, but there has heretofore been a particular order to that effect from our Secretary.

I must inform you that I have been on all the Councils of War that the Genl has convened & that he has given me several orders which I have obeyed, the last was to assume the Command of the Garrison here, during his & major [William] M Rea's absence, who have gone (in the Steam boat) with a reinforcement for Placquemine, & to throw up a redoubt at the Balize, under the existing state of things, I am embarrassed how to act, I was yesterday by the arrival of a senior officer relieved from the Command of the Garrison, & now wish to proceed to the Pass of Christian with the marines; to fulfill your orders, by doing which I may disobey the orders of Genl Wilkinson if he considers me under his command.

I am very desirous of having a Command in the line Should the land forces have any thing to do here, which I can only obtain through Genl Wilkinson & then it is necessary I should throw a Detachment of marines into that service to entitle me thereto.

By a late Act of Congress I observe that all officers [in the] Army are allowed the Pay, rations & clothing [allowance] in lieu of taking a Servant from the [Army] be pleased to inform me if that indulgence extends to our Corps, and what number of Servants are allowed to each officer. Yours Respectfully

Dan Carmick

ALS, DNA, RG127, CMC, Letters Received.

LIEUTENANT COLONEL COMMANDANT FRANKLIN WHARTON, U.S.M.C., TO MAJOR DANIEL CARMICK, U.S.M.C.

H.Q. of the Marine Corps
Washington Octr 1st 1812

Sir!

I have the pleasure of acknowledging the receipt of your Letters under dates 24th & 31st Inst. The delay occasioned by the stopping of the vessel, in which your overalls, &c &c were sent to you has been as unfortunate, as it was unforceen, from some cause she put into Carolina, & it was not ascertained by us until after your letter was handed. I hope however by this time you have received the Articles, as I find by a letter from Majr General [Thomas] Pinckney to the Secretary of War, that the Stores were reshipped on the 14th of this Month for New Orleans, in the Pilot Boat, *Lelia Ann* should it happen otherwise you must purchase the overalls on the best terms; in the course of a few days Brankets [*blankets*], Woollen overalls &c &c, will leave Philada for Pittsburgh, & I expect be with you in time.

You have really experienced a most calamitous time in the late Tornado, menaced as you were by Insurrection: it is to be viewed as a matter of congratulation that so few lives were lost, the early discovery of the latter may I suppose account for it in some respects, as the time & situation of the Inhabitants would much have encreased the opportunity to perpetrate the Acts intended by the Negroes, it is rather singular that among the Military should be found any of the Insurgents, or rather Abettors of them. I can reconcile it only by a supposition that he was put there to neutralize the Soldiery, if found guilty, the Law I hope will do Justice to your Soldier, & not less to the Citizens.

Your Barracks are partially distroyed, & you recommend the building of New, & the putting them in an other place. I should be happy if were in my mower [*power*] to sanction the proposals, but I have it not, & the Honourable, the Secretary of the Navy is absent. I must therefore merely recommend to you their repair on the best terms, until we can have permanent Quarters erected, which I have reason to think will be Soon, & perhaps the Number of Marines with you on the Station, for whom you say employment could be found.

Your report of the return of the *Syren* was very acceptable at the office, as she was thought to be lost from her being missing. The officers with you to receive pay, will draw it from the day of their acceptance;

Lieutenant Colonel Commandant Franklin Wharton, U.S.M.C.

& in reply to your enquiry about Waiters I will inform You, that in conversation with our Accountant he has no doubt as to the propriety of our receiving the same emoluments from the late Law of Congress, which the officers of the Army may be entitled to, under this opinion I shall certainly draw from my Waiters. The President of the U. States has directed the following Regulations for the Army, Viz.

Major Generals	6	Waiters
Brigadier-Generals	4	do
Colonels	3	do
Lieut. Collonels	2	do
Majors	2	do
Hospital Surgeons	2	do
All other commissioned Officers	each 1	do

I feel some reluctance in answering that part of your Letter which regards doing duty under Army officers, apprehensive that it may appear to Genl Wilkinson, who was, I know very desirous of your services, that I wish to withhold them from Him, I trust however that he will not impute to me motives so contrary to me, but will only look at the situation I am placed in & judge accordingly, but to it, in a conversation had with the department, to which we belong, I am led to believe that all our officers detached from this for Naval Services, either by Sea, or Land, must consider themselves undoubtedly call'd on to obey the orders of the Naval Commander on the Station, or at Sea-it is however to be also understood, that this will not preclude them from aiding, & assisting the Army operations, when it can be done without Injury to such Naval Services, on a consultation had with, & approval of, the Naval Commander, to whom I have alluded. You will remember all the difficulties had on the points heretofore, & you may depend they have encreased lately, instead of being reduced. I will yet believe that some perfect System will be adopted to the Satisfaction of all parties of the Navy. Much is looked for from Congress this Winter, & I think we have a right to expect something for the Corps. The point in dispute must be closed for the good of the Service, or, I know not what will become of us, we have rights which ought to be known & established to make the Corps what it ought to be, one thing is most certain, we cannot belong, at the same time, to the departments of War, & Navy, we were created for the first, & cannot, I conceive, be under the other in anyone way, except by the immediate order of the President of the U. States. I can have no doubt but you will be able to aid General Wilkinson without any departure from your Marine Duties, & I presume the Naval officer on the Station will not raise any difficulties to prevent it. I am very Respectfully [&c.]

F. Wharton

Major Daniel Carmick.
Commandg Marines, New Orleans.

Copy, DNA, RG127, CMC, Letters Sent.

Rebuilding the Naval Force

Following the August 19th hurricane, Captain Shaw pressed hard to raise sunken vessels and to launch those that had been stranded by the storm tide. In early October, Secretary Hamilton sent Shaw direct orders to cooperate with Brigadier General Wilkinson despite Shaw's previously voiced distaste for working under a senior army commander, and Wilkinson, in particular. The general was not an easy man to accommodate. He constantly made demands upon naval resources and tried to replace some of Shaw's appointees with those favorable to himself. The result was a continuing expression of discontent in the reports received by the Navy Department and a precipitous decline in morale among officers under Shaw's command. The documents in the next section begin with Hamilton's endorsement of the need to take orders from Wilkinson, followed by two reports from Shaw on the navy's recovery from hurricane damage. His comments concerning Wilkinson indicate a reluctant compliance with the secretary's orders.

Secretary of the Navy Hamilton to Captain John Shaw

Capt Jno Shaw
New Orleans

Nav: Dep'mt
12 Octo: 1812

The public good requires, that I should direct You, to attend to the orders of Brigadier Genl Wilkinson, or the Commanding officer of the army near New Orleans in the disposition of the vessels under Your

Command, the details however of Your command will not be interfered with.

This order does not proceed from any want of confidence in You, but with the indispensible of having but one head to direct our operations on distant Stations.

P. Hamilton

Copy, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 10, p. 174.

CAPTAIN JOHN SHAW TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

New Orleans Octr 27th 1812

Sir

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letters of the 5th and 25th ult. to which due attention shall be given.

Public duty called me in the early part of this month to Tchifoncta, at which place Gun Vessels *No 5 & 24*, were repairing; and from thence I had to proceed to join the few Gun Vessels stationed at and near to the Bay St Louis, for the purpose of making arrangements for the recovery of two 24 pounder Cannons, and a quantity of cannon-shot, thrown overboard from *Nos 162 & 23*, in the time of the hurricane; as also, for getting off and repairing, *No 25*, driven ashore at the same time, at the Bay St Louis. I do assure you, Sir, that no time has been lost since the gale, in getting repaired and fitted for active service, our disabled vessels; the only one of which that will be completely lost to the public, is Gun Vessel *No 23*; which was, as formerly mentioned, driven out, into an extensive swamp or marsh, at least three miles from the sea-shore. The list, herewith enclosed, exhibits the real situation of the whole force under my command; and I most sincerely regret that the *Enterprise* has been ordered from this station, her services being much wanted here; as, in co-operation with the *Siren*, she could not fail of greatly annoying the Commerce of the Enemy in the Gulph of Mexico, and taking many of the Jamaica ships, on their passage round the West end of Cuba, for Europe.

The Ship, *Remittance*, formerly mentioned as having been purchased into the service, and which is now called the *Louisiana*, will very shortly be ready to receive a crew; but it appears to me, Sir, a moral impossibility that a sufficient number of seamen can be procured here to man her, as there are not actually, so many in the place. A Rendezvous has been kept constantly open, ever since December last, and we are now offering a bounty of ten dollars, which will probably have to be doubled. Carpenters are not to be got at present, on any terms, to cross to the Bay St Louis to work on the Block Ship contemplated to built in that quarter for the defence of the Rigolets &c; but if she were even now ready, from the causes just mentioned, it would be found impracticable to man her: I do earnestly solicit therefore, that 200 able seamen may be entered in some of the Atlantic Ports, and sent here on board of as many as six fast sailing schooners, such as I have on a former occasion described; and suggested to be, even in a time of peace, almost indispensible for the support of the Revenue laws. Our whole coast Westwardly of the Balize, is at this moment, infested with pirates and smugglers, who appear to have arrayed themselves, with a determination of opposing the laws of our country by force; and of setting at defiance, all the means afforded us of punishing them. The number and description of vessels I have mentioned, each mounting 6 or 8 eighteen pounder canonades, together with a long 18 pounder on a circle amidships, would enable us to clear the coast, effectually of this Marine Banditti, and greatly to annoy the British Commerce, carried on with the Spanish Provinces, through the Mexican Gulph.

The article of Gun powder is so scarce with us, as, that the necessary supply for the Sloop of War, *Louisiana*, will take almost the whole of what we have in our Magazine; Hence a necessity for an ample supply to be forwarded as early as possible. The pistols which we have now in store, are all, nearly worn out in the service, of which article, we are in want of, at least, 150 pair, and of Ship's sabres, about 300. We are much in want here, of commissioned Lieutenants, great embarrassment being experienced, for want of a larger number, in convening Courts Martial. If it be correct, as we have understood, that Mr Thomas ap Catesby Jones has been promoted to a Lieutenant; may I request that the Honorable Secretary, will be pleased to forward to him, his commission. Since my arrival on this Station, our Navy arsenal has been deficient of a Master Ship-Carpenter: Will you be so good as to authorize me to appoint one, as in a state of War, such a person is greatly needed, and indeed, we cannot, at present, do well without one. The return of sick now in the Navy-Hospital, does not exceed 56;

which is a considerable reduction since my last. With much respect, I have the honor to be [&c.]

John Shaw

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 147.

[Enclosure]

A List Exhibiting the Number, actual Condition, and present distribution of the armed vessels under my Command, on the New Orleans Station.

The Brig *Siren*, will shortly sail, having 140 men on board, 52 of whom, have recently been drafted from the Gun vessels
The Brig *Viper*, is ready for Service, but is deficient, by 30, in her Compliment of Men, having but 60 on board.
The Brig *Enterprize*, is afloat again, is just completed in her repairs, will haul out into the stream, in from, 6 to 8 days, but is 20 men short
Gun Vessels *No 156* & *163* are on Convoy of military stores, bound for Fort Stoddart.
Gun Vessels *No 65. 162, 22, 27*, are now between the Bay St Louis, Cat Island, & the Rigolets
Gun Vessel *No 66*, is ordered into Tchifoncta to repair
Gun Vessel *No 5* & *24* are under repairs at Tchifoncta
Gun Vessels *No 64* & *25*, are still on shore, the former, at fort St Johns, and the latter at the Bay St Louis
and
Gun Vessel *No 23* is entirely lost, to the service

New Orleans
Novr 2nd 1812
John Shaw

DS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 147. Last three lines are in Shaw's hand.

Captain John Shaw to Secretary of the Navy Hamilton

New Orleans Novr 9. 1812.

Sir,

Agreeably to your direction I have now the honor of transmitting to you a copy of the letter from the Navy-Department; dated, 25th September last, on the subject of the defence of New Orleans &c.

My last communication to the Honorable Secretary truly exhibits, what was at that time the real state and condition of the Naval forces attached to this station; since which but little change has taken place. The Brigs *Enterprise* and *Viper*, so far as relates to repairs, are in complete readiness for sea; but their movements, will, I apprehend, be greatly impeded, by the scarcity of seamen. The ship *Louisiana* will be ready to receive a crew in the course of a month; and as I am realy at a loss to know how men are to be procured; instructions from the Honorable Secretary on the subject, is respectfully solicited. As the terms of service of forty or fifty men, belonging to the Brig *Siren*, will expire in about for months,-and as we cannot possibly calculate on entering others to supply their places here; would it not be advisable for her to be ordered round for that purpose, either to St Mary's, or to Charleston.

Our Gun Vessels will ere long, at the expense of much time and labor, be in pretty good condition for service: I intend that *Nos 22* & *25*, formerly condemned as unfit for service, shall be repaired as soon as time may permit. The block Ship cannot, in my opinion, be laid down before next Spring; as I should find it impossible, at this time, to prevail on 20 Carpenters in this City to cross the lakes, were I to offer them three dollars per day each, and a ration.

This station will cause the Navy-Department immense sums of money; the General is, however, as I presume, in the command of it; and I hope I may be permitted to express my most profound repugnance and regret at finding myself to be one of his subalterns; feelings, Sir, excited by the respect which I cherish for myself and my officers. The only consequences to be anticipated, are, general confusion-arrests-Courts Martial &c-Soldiers and sailors, having never yet agreed in the same mess. The Generals requisitions on me some time since for work to be performed by the Navy could not be accomplished by 500 Carpenters in 6 months. Much of the Army expenses, here, is now to be saddled on the Navy. However, as it has been thought proper to place a post Captain, and a Squadron of the Navy under his orders, I have nothing further to do than to obey them, complying with all demands of whatever nature, which he may make on me. Should additional Boats be wanted for service–the only mode by which they are to be obtained, is by purchase, as an attempt to build can by no means answer. I shall recommend to the Navy Agent, the purchase, at present, of two small vessels for the Lake service. Sir, I have the honor to be [&c.]

John Shaw

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 172.

Please, Get Me Out of Here!

Ambitious young naval officers soon developed a distaste for duty on the New Orleans station. Yet many discovered that once assigned there, it was almost impossible to obtain new orders. If they proved themselves highly competent, it was unlikely that Captain Shaw would want to dispense with their services, but if they were less than outstanding, the Navy Department had no need for them elsewhere. While there were two lucky ones who escaped (Johnston Blakeley and Joseph Bainbridge), most others did not. Under the risks of duty in a disease-prone environment,[1] burdened by torpid heat, and limited by the essentially defensive posture of naval operations, these men saw their chances for brilliant careers fading away. The requirement for duty in small, shallow-draft vessels did not appeal to men craving blue water and tall ships. They knew that the laurels of this war would be won by those manning the swift-sailing, more powerful ships of the frigate navy in the Atlantic. There lay the future promotions, prize money, and fame required for a climb to the top of the small American navy. The following letters portray mounting dissatisfaction among junior naval officers on the station.[2]

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[1] *For a detailed discussion of diseases on the New Orleans station and the medical practices of the time, see two letters of Surgeon Lewis Heermann to the secretary of the navy dated 20 Mar and 23 May 1812, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 1, Nos. 129 and 275.*

[2] *For another example, see the letters of Midshipman Thomas ap Catesby Jones to Hamilton, 28 Nov. 1811, DNA, RG45, BC, 1811, Vol. 2, No. 262, and 25 Sept. 1812, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 67.*

Midshipman Thomas T. Webb to Secretary of the Navy Hamilton

United States Gun Vessel *No. 5*
New Orleans Septbr the 17th 1812.

Sir

After being on furlough for nearly fourteen Months, and all that Time in the Merchant Service I was ordered by Commodore Shaw to join Gun Vessel *No. 5*, on this Station; And being fully convinced, that by Remaining onboard of a Gun Vessel I shall not have it in my power of obtaining those honors, that I so earnestly desire. I therefore beg leave to Request that you will order me on board, one of the crusing Vessels on the Northern Station.

Previous to the Attainment to my suit for a furlough I served my Country upwards of two Years, and since that time the labor's of a Seaman in a Merchant Ship has been a pleasure to me, by obtaining that Knowledge of Seaman-ship, which is Requisite to capasitate me for any Service, that you, or my Country may require. I should not have made this Request, if I thought that my Service's were in great demand on this Station, but as they can be dispensed with, without any detriment to the Vessels here: I trust to your will to change my situation. I have the honor to be with the highest Respect [&c.]

Tho^{s}: T. Webb

ALS, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 56. Endorsed: "Spoken well of by Lt [William] Carter Jr. P.H."

Lieutenant Daniel S. Dexter to Captain John Shaw

U.S. Gun Vessel, *No 162*,
Bay St Louis, 10th Nov. 1812.

Sir,

Being authentically informed that the Brig *Enterprize* is to proceed to the Atlantic States, as soon as She is ready for sea, I feel it a duty I owe myself, as an officer, to request your permission to leave this station, and take a passage in her to Washington.

My having been six years in this Country, (a long service on one station); a prospect I have of being able to obtain a more honorable and advantageous situation, and there being no other command for me here than a Gun Boat, are circumstances sufficiently weighty, in my opinion, to induce me to hope that my request will be attended to.

Nothing of importance has transpired here, since the date of my last letter, except the accident which happened to the *Siren*, of which you have doubtless heard, ere this. I have the honor to be [&c.]

(Signed) Dan^{l} S. Dexter

Commodore Shaw.

Copy, DNA, RG45, Daniel Dexter Letterbook, p. 30. In Dexter's hand.

LIEUTENANT DANIEL T. PATTERSON TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

New Orleans Novr 10th 1812

Sir

I do myself the honour to address you, on a subject which is to me of the greatest moment, which has engaged my most unremitted attention for years past and is still received by me with encreased Anxiety, viz my promotion in the Navy, in which I have served for nearly fourteen years, without having ever enjoyed a Furlough.

The cause of my obtruding myself upon your attention at this moment; Arises from having read a paragraph in the National Intelligencer of the 6th Ulto. announcing that the President had conferred upon Lieut. Charles Morris[1] late 1st of the Frigate *Constitution*, the rank of Captain in the Navy of the United States, for the Gallantry displayed by him, in the Action between the U.S. Frigate *Constitution*, and his Britannic Majesty's Frigate *Guerriere*, which terminated so gloriously for our Flag. Lieut. Morris was as you know a junior Lieut. to me; that he is an Officer of great merit, and a very Gallant, Valuable one, I admit; for since I have known him I have admired, and ever done justice to his Merits, but in the Action for which he has been promoted over me, I cannot discover from the Official letters of Captain Hull, that he particularly distinguished himself by any Special Act of Gallantry. On the Contrary, Captain Hull, after speaking of the Able Manner in which he was aided by Lieut. Morris goes on to say, that if he was to particularize any one Officer he should be doing injustice to the Others; inferring from that, that each Officer acquitted himself equally well, how then with deference permit me to ask, is he entitled, for his conduct in this Action, to be advanced over a Senior Officer.

I have ever been and still continue, a strong advocate for rewarding superior Merit, and for advancing an Officer for performing any signal Act of Gallantry, whereby he distinguishes himself Above his Brother Officers in the same Contest, over the heads of those who may be Senior to him in his Own Grade, or even over those of a Grade superior to him; and had the *Guerriere* been taken by Boarding, and Lieut Morris have headed the Boarders, or had Captain Hull been Unfortunately Killed, or wounded so severely as to have Obliged him to leave the Deck, and Lieut Morris have fought the Ship Afterwards, and the result been as glorious as it has terminated, then I should have advocated his promotion, and I believe there are few Officers in the Service who were Senior to him, who would have been more pleased, at his advancement, or more readily acknowledged the justice of it than I, but neither of these cases Exist. Feeling highly Ambitious, as I do to rise to the highest grade of my profession, and Anxious for an oppetunity to signalyze myself, which I have probably been deprived of by being compelled contrary to my wishes, to remain on this inactive forlorn Station, for permit me to recall to your remembrance, the application I made to the Department, to leave this Station dated the 7th of Feby. 1811, to which you did me the honor to reply immediately Stating that "Special considerations forbid your granting my request at that time, but that when Capt Shaw should think my Services could be dispensed with he might Order me to Washington and you would acquiesce in the Order." this altho. unknown to you, was tantamount to a positive refusal of my request; as Captain Shaw, I knew would never permit me to leave this Station, unless by a positive Order from you.

After taking a dispassionate view of Lieut. Morris's Merits and particularly the part he bore so honourably to himself and Country in the Action before Alluded to, and the Manner in which I have served since my first entrance into the Navy, and my being Kept on a Station, where no opportunity could be afforded me, to distinguish myself for want of proper vessels, and none permitted me elsewhere, I cannot but feel that the Promotion of Lieut Morris over me is a hardship, and one of such a Nature as to cause me severe Mortification; I should not have troubled you on this subject, but that I feel my case as peculiarly hard, when contrasted with that of Other Officers on More Active Stations; With great Respect I have the Honour to be [&c.]

Danl. T. Patterson

ALS, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 150.

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[1] Lieutenant Charles Morris's promotion over the heads of equally experienced and more senior officers raised a storm of protest. For further documentation, see pp. 516-23.

Lieutenant Johnston Blakeley to Secretary of the Navy Hamilton

U.S Brig *Enterprize*, Balize, mouth of
the river Mississippi 29th Novr 1812

Sir

I had the honour to receive your orders of 30th August;[1] but as we were at that time on shore and it was uncertain when we should get afloat; all of which I suppose you were kept informed of by Capt Shaw; I did not think it necessary to answer, until I could do so with certainty.

I have now to report to you, we are thus far in obedience to your orders, and expect to leave this tomorrow. Permit me to express to you, how grateful I feel for your attention to my application and how rejoiced I am to be relieved from a station where I have experienced nothing, but delay, disappointment and disaster. I have the honour to be [&c.]

J. Blakeley

ALS, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 191.

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[1] Hamilton to Blakeley, 30 Aug. 1812, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 10, p. 137, ordered *Enterprise* to the St. Marys Station.

Lieutenant Daniel S. Dexter to Charles W. Goldsborough

U.S. Ship *Louisiana*,
New Orleans, Decr 28, 1812

Sir,

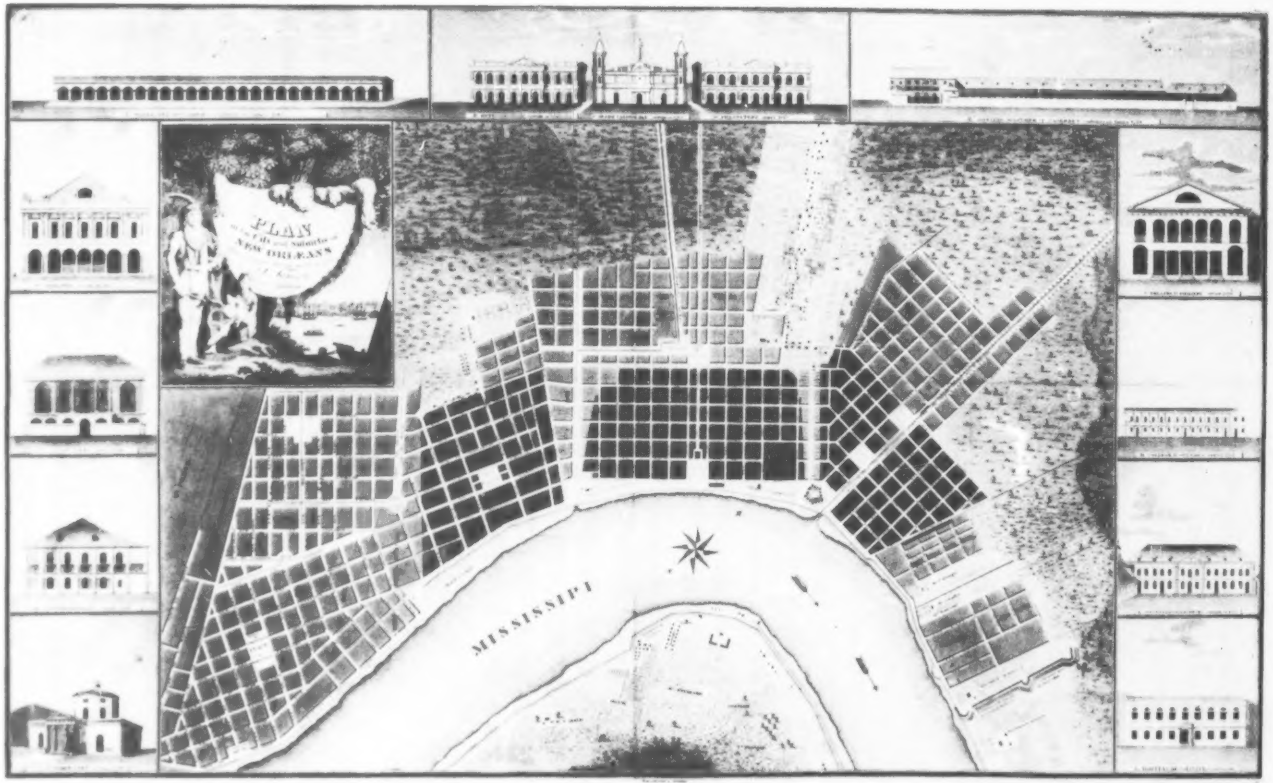
I have the honor to solicit the influence of your intercession with the Secretary of the Navy, to obtain perforce my removal from this Station; and I feel Conscious that the reasons I shall advance, and which induce me to urge this request, ought, and, I hope will, induce him to grant it.

In the first place, Sir, permit me to remind you that I have already remained six successive years in this place, subject to all the local as well as natural disadvantages of the station and climate, without any alteration in my rank, and very little in my Commands. This long service, only, on the same station, should, I conceive, entitle me to claim a change of it as my right.

But, Sir, this is not all; I cannot forbear expressing my disapprobation of the imbecile meansures pursued by those in whom the direction of our Naval affairs here, is vested; while our Atlantic Coast is daily witnessing the gallant exploits of my brother officers, I cannot but exclaim against the rigour of my destiny, which obliges me still to remain here only to see and participate in a torpid, unmanly, and I had almost said, a disgraceful state of inactivity, under the controul [of] a naval officer, in whose inattintion and cautious timidity, I cannot, in justice to myself acquiesce; and who is himself, in fact, ruled by the arrogant and capricious humour of a Military officer, quite unversed in Naval affairs. You may, perhaps, consider my remarks severe, but I think they are not unjust or unmerited.

I some time since accepted the command of a sloop of War fitting out here, called the *Louisiana*, under impression that she was to be made a cruising vessel; but I am now convinced by her armament, (sixteen 24 pounders on her gun deck) that she is to remain stationary in the river; this circumstance makes me doubly anxious to leave a station, where I must either be cooped up in the Lakes in a Gun boat, or in the river in a block Ship.

My having applied twice before this to the Secretary for a removal (though, from their remaining unanswered perhaps my applications were never received)[1] and the reliance I have on your influence, induces me to hope soon to experience the satisfaction of receiving an order to leave this station.


PLAN
of the City and Suburbs of
NEW ORLEANS
MISSISSIPI

[illegible]

We have no news here, except the arrival of a public Spanish armed Brig, and three other Vessels, from Vera Cruiz, for Flour; the inhabitants of which place are almost in a state of starvation. I have the honor to be [&c.]

(Signed) Dan^{l} S. Dexter.

Chas. W. Goldsborough, Esq.

Copy, DNA, RG45, Daniel Dexter Letterbook, pp. 44-45. In Dexter's hand.

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[1] Recipient's copies not found.

Bad Luck for Joseph Bainbridge

The choicest command on the New Orleans station was the brig Siren. *She was relatively well-armed, though undermanned, and had escaped major damage during the August hurricane. Secretary Hamilton picked a relatively senior lieutenant to command her. He was the younger brother of* Constitution*'s commanding officer, Commodore William Bainbridge. Joseph Bainbridge had served in the Quasi-War with France and the Barbary Wars. Indeed, he had been one of the volunteers in the* Intrepid*'s burning of the frigate* Philadelphia *in Tripoli Harbor. Destined for a respectable though not brilliant naval career, Joseph Bainbridge was overshadowed by his more famous brother. It was typical of his luck to be engaged in a three month overland journey from Philadelphia to New Orleans when the War of 1812 began. When he arrived, exhausted after his arduous journey, Lieutenant Bainbridge assumed command of* Siren, *but was soon embarrassed by her running aground in Mississippi Sound. This was an inauspicious beginning for the future commander of the sloop* Frolic. *The following documents portray Bainbridge's plight and his state of mind after the grounding incident. His report includes comments on Lieutenant Charles Morris's promotion, the desirability of sailing* Siren *north for refitting, and Brigadier General Wilkinson's authority. In an accompanying document, Bainbridge's officers provided a sympathetic testimonial to his seamanship.*

best copy available

LIEUTENANT JOSEPH BAINBRIDGE TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

U.S. Brig *Siren* Decr 5th 1812
Off Pass Christian

Sir,

I have the honor of writing you for the first time since my leaving Washington, but hope the circumstances I shall hereafter mention, will explain the cause of your not hearing from me sooner.

In your orders of the 9th May 1812, you gave me permission to go as far as Boston, to see my brother, but I did not get farther than New York, where I remained two weeks, and returned to Philadelphia in order to proceed to New Orleans agreeably to your orders, when I arrived at Philadelphia I found no vessel going to Orleans, in consequence of the War, it was therefore necessary for me to go to Pittsburgh, and proceed down the rivers Ohio and Mississippi to Orleans. I arrived at Pittsburgh the 28th of June, and in consequence of the difficulty of procuring boats did not leave it until the 10th of July, and after a long and tedious passage of fifty days, a part of the way in an open Skiff and a Kentucky flatt, arrived at Natchez extremely indisposed, this however did not abate my anxiety of getting to Orleans, and after remaining three days left that place and arrived at Orleans the sixth Septr but so ill that I was carried to my bed, and was confined until a few days before my arrival on board this vessel the 7th of Novr. After my arrival on board I had great difficulties to encounter to get the vessel to Sea, she being then short of men, and having to transfer a great many who were English Subjects. I also found her deficient in many articles, which were indispensibly necessary for a vessel of war, bound on a Cruize, and particularly a Launch, which is almost as absolutely necessary as the Main Mast to a Ship.

The place in which she lays and the distance from Orleans, present many impediments in procuring supplies, some very considerable delay therefore followed.

On the 4th Ulto. I sailed, and in beating down the coast near Horn Island in order to get an offing, on the following day; I struck on a Shoal not laid down in any chart that I have on board, and after exerting every means in my power to get the Vessel off with my two small boats having no Launch I was obliged to adopt the unpleasant alternative of throwing overboard nine of my twenty four pound Carronades and part of my Shot-I should not have sailed without a

Launch, but my zeal for the honor of the service made me prefer that inconvenience to the disgrace of remaining so long inactive, as she has lain a considerable time at her anchors. I sent some of my officers and men to search for the Guns, but their exertions have proved fruitless, as they perhaps were buried in quick sand, the coast is very liable to changes as has been witnessed since the late gale of the 19th August, since which time, that and many other shoals have been discovered, that were never known before, or mentioned in the charts.[1]

But conscious of my own rectitude, I flatter myself Sir, that you will also think my conduct blameless, after fully considering the circumstances.

I take the liberty of enclosing you some letters received from my officers, which will more fully illustrate the facts relating to that unlucky accident, and will prove to you that I do not stand alone in my opinion of my own rectitude.

I beg leave very respectfully Sir, to touch on an event, which to me is a source of much uneasiness-Viz-The Promotion of Lt Morris, much as I appreciate the merit of that valuable officer, and no one can more highly esteem his qualifications as an Officer and a man, than I do, I nevertheless cannot without pain, view his elevation above myself, particularly when I reflect that fourteen years of my life, the full half of it, have been devoted to the Service of my country, and that any officer should have obtained that, by a fortuitous combination of circumstances, which I have long and so hardly struggled to earn, and I hope not without some little claim, namely promotion or preferment in my profession, the only bounty which an officer can claim or hope, from the patronage of his Government.

It is with the utmost regret Sir, that I mention to you my sentiments on this subject, in doing which, I hope I shall not incur your censure, as I am sure your sentiments would be similar on a similar occasion.

I beg leave to suggest to you the propriety of ordering the *Siren* to the Northward, as she is much in want of repairs, having never had any since she was built which is now ten or twelve years, except some very trivial and partial ones-whatever might be necessary, could not be done here but at a double expence, if at all-she is also too large for the station, as she draws too much water, and in bad weather can make no harbour but the Balize, which is very difficult of access, and with a head wind or foggy weather it is impossible to enter it-we have no harbour on the coast but Mobile bay, and it would be impossible to beat into that, -nor could we even beat into Pensacola with a head wind. I have received orders from Commodore Shaw to go to the Mississippi to heave out the vessel, and examine her bottom, and tho' I am not apprehensive that she has received any injury as she makes no water, I nevertheless think it adviseable as her bottom has become very full of barnacles, which have very much injured her sailing, that she should be hove out.

I shall go however without a Launch conformable to his orders.

I hope Sir, you will pardon me for mentioning one more circumstance which is mortifying I believe to every naval officer on the Station, the appointment of Genl Wilkinson to the command of the Naval forces of this station. Though friendly I feel to the General I cannot but think it mortifying that there could not have been found an officer, in the Navy whose talents would have rendered him competent to act in conjunction with the Army, instead of placing the Naval establishment under the immediate controul of an Army officer.

I have spoken to you Sir, on many points, and hope I have not trespassed too much on your patience, and I repeat I flatter myself, that you will grant me your indulgence, and not disapprove sentiments, which I feel confident your own magnanimity would suggest. Believe me Sir, with sentiments of the highest respect and esteem [&c.]

Joseph Bainbridge

LS, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 201.

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1. For correspondence exchanged by those attempting to assist Bainbridge, see Dexter to Bainbridge, 9 Nov. 1812, DNA, RG45, Daniel Dexter Letterbook, p. 30; Dexter to Alexis, 13 Nov. 1812, ibid., p. 32; and Dexter to Shaw, 18 Nov. 1812, ibid., p. 35.

[Enclosure]

U.S. Brig *Siren* Friday 6th Novr 1812
off Cat Island

Lieut Commdt. Josef Bainbridge
Sir,

We, the undersigned, officers of the *Siren* beg leave on this occasion, to address you, we hope that though unsolicited by you so to do (for we are sensible that your own consciousness of rectitude would make you abhor the idea of asking any, much less a partial Statement from us, except befor a proper tribunal, our frank approval of your conduct, during our perilous situation of the last night, at least will not be offensive, the more especially, as it is the spontaneous effusion of our hearts and a tribute we voluntarily give to your merits as an officer and a man.[1]

As we undertake to address you and to comment it may not be improper here to make a recapitulation of the *Siren*'s striking on the Shoal yesterday. We got underway yesterday, Thursday Nov 5th, the North point of Ship Island, bearing E.N.E. the South West point of Ship Island S.S.E. and the sand bluff of Cat Island W. by S. 1/2 S. and with the wind ahead continued to beat down the coast along Ship Island with the intention of Making an offing, so as to stand off to sea on a cruise, but, at about 5 oClock in the afternoon, when standing on the Starboard tack, Horn Island, then to the Northward with regular soundings of about four fathoms, it Suddenly Shoaled and before the Ship could be brought round She Struck on a Shoal, hitherto not laid down that we remember in any chart of this coast and certainly not in the charts we have on board, which are the latest and most correct. Immediately on Striking, the boats were lowered down and every exertion made by carring out anchors to get the vessel off; we carried out in our cutter, a verry Small boat for the purpose having no launch on board, a Small Stream anchor, and after that a Kedge; carried out a Second Stream anchor, and parted a Stream Cable, and left the anchor buoy'd. After heaving out those anchors untill they nearly came home to the Vessel and finding no greater prospect of removing the Brig from her dangerous Situation and unable to carry out any large Anchors, a Sheet or a bower anchor, our little boates having been already one upset and both much injured, and the Ship beating so as to give reason every moment to expect that she would go to peices, you call'd a council of your officers to know their opinions, before you would proceed to the last resort of throwing over the guns; this necessity was painfull Sir, but nevertheless, imperious, as the vessel had already, been upward of five hours beating violintly on the reef, and was every moment if possible, getting into farther danger, from which in a Short time, all hope must have been lost of Saving her; We Said before that this last resort of throwing over Some of the guns, was the only hope left us, it was our unanimous opinion when you ask'd our advice and we were happy to find that it accorded with your own. It is verry certain, that had the vessel have been provided with a launch to carry out anchors of a larger size, the unfortunate alternative of throwing over the guns and Shot, might have been avoided and that we might have proceeded on a cruise without twenty minuets delay and without sustaining any loss whatever, but having none nothing else could be done.

Without wishing to offend you, by bestowing on you any unmerited applause for your unremitted exertions, and Manly and Officerlike coolness, and self command during those five or Six hours, that tried every heart, permit us to advert to your exemplary conduct, since the first moment of your taking command of this vessel. We have witness'd your extreme anxiety to get your vessel to sea and the many difficulties you have had to encounter and though we regret from our hearts the occurrence of the unlucky accident, which has for a time impeded and delayed our cruise, we are yet fully sensible that no human wisdom could have foreseen or prevented it, as you Kept the deck and Watch'd the vessel, from the time we saild, until that unlucky moment. Sensible how prone men are to censure, without evidence to warrant it, and to deny applause even when just, we feel a pleasure in thus expressing to you our Sentiments, as it may heighten the delight in conscious rectitude, inasmuch, as those, whose candour dictates this testimonial, were eye witnesses on the occasion which gave rise to it.

We are willing that you use this letter as you please and can Affirm to what we have Said above before any competent tribunal should it be necessary. Believe us Sir with the deepest interest in your Welfare, Sincerely yours

Signed John Walter Gibbs Lieut.
Otho Norris "
Samuel Henley "
Jonathn D. Ferris Sailing Master
Jno Achilles Kearney Surgeon
Robert Pottenger Purser

Copy, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 201.

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1. A similar, short statement was composed by the warrant and petty officers of *Siren* and sent to Bainbridge on the following day. See Joseph Martin, Jr., et al. to Bainbridge, 7 Nov. 1812, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 3, bound between Nos. 214 and 215, though unrelated to either document.

Fitting Out *Louisiana*

Lieutenant Daniel Dexter, formerly the commander of a division of gunboats, was given command of the recently acquired Louisiana *in December 1812. She had been only lightly damaged in the August hurricane and needed repairs; however, Captain Shaw intended to convert her into a cruiser to be stationed off the Balize, southeast of the delta. But General Wilkinson disagreed and thought* Louisiana *should be rigged as a block ship for use on the river. As we know from other letters, Lieutenant Dexter was disgusted with duty at New Orleans (see pp. 422–23 and 426–28) and wanted to command an active cruising vessel. As the following document shows, Dexter was fully engaged in readying* Louisiana *in compliance with Shaw's orders.*

Lieutenant Daniel S. Dexter to Captain John Shaw

U.S. Ship *Louisiana*
New Orleans, 21st Decr 1812.

Sir,

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of today, and to inform you that no exertion has been or shall be wanting on my part, to get the *Louisiana* out of Dock the soonest.

There are now twenty one Carpenters at work for her, and Mr Legare informs me that his work will [be] completed in four days, at which time I shall be ready to receive my armaments, Guard of Marines, &c &c. The hammocks and bags were indented for the day after I took command, and a number of men have been employed making these ever since; they will all be ready by the time the Carpenters work is done. The rigging is in a state of forwardness; and the Boatswain and his Crew will be able to complete it in the required time. An application has already been made to Capt. Woolstoncroft, for the Elm timber, which will be procured to day. I have the honor to be [&c.]

(Signed) Dan^{l} S. Dexter.

Commodore John Shaw.

Copy, DNA, RG45, Daniel Dexter Letterbook, p. 43. In Dexter's hand.

The Purser's Dispute

The continuing flow of supplies and accurate record-keeping are essential elements of successful administration in any naval station or vessel. During the War of 1812, the purser was the officer obligated to carry out these tasks. It was accepted that part of his earnings would be based on commissions added to the cost of articles he sold to naval personnel on his station or ship. At New Orleans, most officers and men were attached to small vessels or served ashore in various support capacities. Their needs were to be taken care of by Purser Thomas Shields who would requisition supplies through the navy agent when necessary. Cruising vessels the size of a brig or sloop, however, were normally assigned their own pursers.

A major dispute occurred in December 1812, when Captain Shaw designated the ship Louisiana *a cruising vessel rather than a stationary block ship. This meant that Purser Shields would have to lose some of his commissions to a new purser assigned to that ship. Shaw wanted to appoint the brother-in-law of Lieutenant Daniel Patterson as* Louisiana*'s purser. When it appeared to Shields that he was about to lose the argument, he went over Shaw's head to Brigadier General Wilkinson who lost no time in opposing Shaw's interest. A considerable amount of ink and paper was consumed on this issue; it was ultimately referred to the secretary of the navy and was not resolved until later in 1813. The following documents present the circumstances of the case as it stood in December 1812.*

PURSER THOMAS SHIELDS TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

New Orleans 21 Decr 1812

Sir,

At a Crisis like the present it is with extreem reluctance that I feel myself compell'd to appeal to your justice & liberality on a subject, that nothing but motives of equity and the duty I owe myself, could extort from me.

When you did me the honor to assign me the appointment I now hold at this place, if I understood you correctly, it was intended for me to take charge, not only of the Accounts of the Gun Boats then in commission on the station, but also of such others as circumstances might render necessary to be added to the number, as well as all other vessels of a Stationary Character, Whose duty, at least as it regards a Purser, might be done on Shore. Under this impression Sir, the enclos'd correspondence, which I have taken the liberty of submitting to your perusal, took place between Commodore Shaw & myself, confident in my own mind that you will decide as justice & equity connected with the true interests of the Service, may dictate or require-Was I incompetent to the duty; or could I be shewn wherein the public good would be advanced by the Creation of another Purser on the Station, I would most cheerfully adopt Comder Shaw's intentions, & come into his views in this appointment, but I can see no advantage resulting from it, and much inconvenience; the Officers on this Station are in the habit of transferring frequently their men from One Vessel to another without attending to the absolute necessity of their accounts accompanying them-This Sir, is an evil I have contended against ever since my arrival here & I am only sorry to be compell'd to observe unsuccessfully; if the number of Officers of my Class are encreasd on a station where business is done in so desultory a manner, the evil I complain of will encrease in a proportionate ratio.

Confusion once admitted into Accounts are difficult & tedious to remedy in all places, but more particularly where we are removed at so great a distance from the Dept. & where the advice & opinions of the Accountant are so necessary but hard to be got. With Sentiments of the highest respect [&c.]

Tho. Shields

ALS, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 230.

[Enclosure]
(Copy) New Orleans 10th, December 1812
Commodore John Shaw,
Sir,

In attempting to detail the reasons that influenced my observations yesterday, I beg leave to solicite your attention to the following facts, which I hope will not be deemed irrellevent to the subject under consideration. On the 2nd March 1812, I received orders from the Hon'ble Secretary of the Navy, to repair to New Orleans, to report myself, on my arrival to the Commanding Naval Officer, and to assume the duties of purser of the Station. This, Sir, so far has been done, on my arrival here I found fifteen Gun Boats in commission, five, since that period have either been condemned or lost, and two others in a little time will experience a similar fate, to remedy this dificiency & the more effectually to secure and defend the passages to the City from an enemy, the Department have authorized you to purchase or build two or more Blockships, these vessels as they are of a Character which preclude the probability of their cruizing, are consider'd as Stationary at their certain points of destination, and according to my idea on the subject, are clearly & decidedly attached to the Station. Consequently the accounts of the officers & men come under the control of my office as being Purser of the Station. I claim it Sir, on the broad basis of a right that ought not either in justice or equity to be wrested from me, under another plea I can with equal justice assert my claim, it will add to the interest of the Public Service; there is not a man in the Country who is acquainted with the method adopted by the department for keeping accounts; the supplies for the vessels could be furnished by me with more ease than to those Gun Boats who are cruizing occasionally & who are sometimes at Mobile & others at Barataria–The pay & Subsistence of two or three pursers, will thereby be saved to the Government, & the duty as well & efficiently done as tho they were appointed & looking on. Interest it is true has considerable weight in producing address to you, but I beg leave to assure you, tis not the only one, I have already experienced the difficulty & confusion resulting from a collision with other purser's on the Station, at the whim & caprice of the different Officers. Your positive orders to the Contrary notwithstanding, to say nothing about the Instructions of the Secretary of the Navy, men are taken from the Gboats to the Brigs & from the Brigs transferred to the Gun Boats, without my knowledge or privity, they consequently are sent & received without any accounts going with them or even the date of entry being known, kept probably some five or Six months & then returned or reexchanged for the same men, or others. This sir, is an evil that I struggled against, ever since my arrival here & am sorry to be obliged to add unsuccessfully, near 40 men are now on my Books under those Circumstances & whither I shall ever get their accounts acknowledged is a serious doubt with me–In an increased ratio will difficulties & confusion of this kind multiply if the number of those officers are increased and more especially as it cannot be expected that they are acquainted with the duties of their station, In addition to this Sir I have the authority of the Officer Commanding the *Louisiana* to say, that he does not require a purser, Confident in his own mind that the duty can be as well, if not better done by me than any other. From the declining number of Gun Boats & of course their crews, my situation as Purser, of this station begins to be but a secondary consideration, with me in a place as expensive as New Orleans. I am however in hopes when you come to reflect seriously on the justness of my Claims you will admit them & the more especially as those Vessels are in part intended to supply the losses of a force acknowledged to be attached to my Office. Respectfully [&c.]

Tho. Shields
Purser

Copy, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 230. In Shields's hand.

[Enclosure] New Orleans Decr 18th 1812.

Sir,

I have the honor to acknowledge your letter of the 10th instant.

Permit me to assure you Sir, that the Sloop of War *Louisiana* cannot be considered in the light of a Block Ship, to the contrary she will have to run out and cruise agreeably to circumstances, as the nature of the case may require-The two block Ships to which you have referred, is not as yet commenced building, but so soon as I can get a gang of Carpenters to cross the Lake one of the B. Ships is intended to be commenced, this, with all other stationary vessels attached to this station cannot be other wise than their necessary supplies for their respective crews coming through you-It is extremely foreign to myself to have caused in any instance an unwarrantable expense to the Government by the erecting of supernumerary officers-and more particularly the one now in question-Knowing that an improper appointing made by me could not fail of terminating in the most serious & injurious consequences to myself.

Mr Shields must be persuaded that he has my best interest, and that at no time shall I do otherwise than to promote it-all and every vessel which may be considered as stationary for the protection of this City, their respective Crews, will no doubt be on his muster book. Sir, With respect [&c.]

John Shaw

Thomas Shields esq.
Purser N O Station.

ALS, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 230.

[Enclosure]
(Copy) New Orleans December 20th 1812
Commodore John Shaw,
Sir,

Your Letter of the 18th inst I had not the honor of receiving until 10 OClock last night.-my anxiety to understand perfectly the nature of the Service in which the Ship *Louisiana* would be possitively employed, induced me, subsequently to the date of your Letter, but previous to its reception, to Wait on Majr Genl Wilkinson, in order to be enabled to ascertain her real Character,-I was induced to do this Sir, the more particularly, because I have understood that the disposition of the Naval force on this Station, was under the control of & entirely at the discretion of the Comdg General. On making the application, Genl Wilkinson, unhesitatingly told me that the Ship *Louisiana*, was never consider'd by him as a Cruising Vessel, that she was a Blockship, or floting Battery, intended solely for the defence of the mouth of the river & that she was to be permanently Stationed at the Balize. Under these circumstances Sir, as a duty I owe myself, I cannot refrain from again, soliciting your attention to my Claims-Claims admitted by yourself in the Letter you did me the honor to write on the 18th inst-Should the appointment of the Gentleman intended to take the Charge of the Pursership of the *Louisiana* have progressed too far, to be now Countermanded, I have only Sir, in pursuiance of a former determination to inform you that my appeal must be made to an higher tribunal, & that the Hon'ble Secretary of the Navy will decide upon the justness or unjustness of my pretentions. With the greatest respect & Consideration [&c.]

Tho. Shields
Purser

Copy, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 230. In Shields's hand.

Lieutenant Daniel T. Patterson to Secretary of the Navy Hamilton

New Orleans Decr 22d 1812

Sir.

Captain Shaw has thought it highly necessary to Appoint a Seperate Purser, to the Ship of War called the *Louisiana*, lately purchased into the Naval Service on this Station, the Gentleman Appointed by him to fill this Station, is my Brother in law Mr Carlile Pollock.

I have therefore taken the liberty to address you on the subject, in which I feel a lively interest, in order to Solicit from you a Confirmation of the appointment, and that if confirmed by you, that you will do him the Honour to nominate him to the Senate for a Commission as a Purser in the Navy of the United States, to which Service he is extremely desirous of becoming permanently Attached: The confirmation of Mr Pollock's Appointment, will lay me under very great obligations to the Honble the Secretary of the Navy, who I hope will not deem this application presumptuous. I have the honour to be [&c.]

Dan^{l} T. Patterson

ALS, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 233.

Chapter Five

The Atlantic Theater: September–December 1812

During late 1812, when American naval officers became disillusioned with duty on remote stations, such as St. Marys, New Orleans, or Black Rock, they requested duty on the Atlantic. For there careers were being made, junior officers were gaining the laurels that might win them a command at sea, and there was the possibility of getting rich on prize money. Captains Hull and Porter had already won national attention, though Commodore Rodgers had fallen short, and Commodore Decatur's time was yet to come. The British blockade was still relatively porous, but there would come a time when sailors who had longed for Atlantic service would yearn for duty on the northern lakes just to escape from the frustration of being bottled up by British squadrons in Long Island Sound or off the Delaware and Virginia capes.

The promise of future victories was fulfilled in the period September–December 1812. Wasp–Frolic, United States–Macedonian, *and* Constitution–Java *were American single-ship victories that established a soaring mood in the small American navy. But there were signs, for those who chose to read them, that this optimism might not last. The British were seizing a large number of American merchantmen and privateers, and many American seamen spent idle months on bleak Melville Island, a prison in Halifax Harbor. It was not easy to find seamen willing to sign on for a two-year naval cruise when prize money in larger shares was available in privateers. British cruisers sailed into the sounds and bays of the southeastern states with impunity. Despite these factors, it took Congress six months after the declaration of war to decide that a larger navy was necessary if the early victories at sea were to be followed up.*

On land, American military defeats and failures to exploit enemy weaknesses along the Great Lakes–St. Lawrence River frontier showed the British that the United States was militarily vulnerable along *thousands of miles of contiguous border. A lack of preparation, stemming from an almost fatal over-confidence in the militia traditions of America's revolutionary "minutemen" doomed any chance of a lasting military conquest on the northern frontier. Generals Hull, Van Rensselaer, Smyth, and Dearborn all lost whatever reputations they had cultivated. By the end of the 1812 campaign season, it was apparent that American mettle would again be sorely tested. If there was to be any chance of success, it would depend upon a rejuvenated military and the establishment of naval superiority on the northern lakes. Commodore Isaac Chauncey, seconded by the capable Lieutenants Melancthon T. Woolsey and Jesse D. Elliott, accomplished a miracle of naval logistics and with sheer bravado overawed the small force of the Provincial Marine on Lakes Ontario and Erie. By the time cold weather arrived, British naval forces on the lakes were on the defensive; but clearly this condition could last only until the opening of navigation. The advantage then would lie with the forces who had best taken advantage of shipbuilding opportunities during the long northern winter.*

In Washington, the Madison administration received an electoral victory in November which seemed to endorse the war, and this strengthened the president's hand in selecting more capable cabinet members. Both Secretary of War William Eustis and Secretary of the Navy Hamilton were perceived as men unequal to the crisis. December was the last month during which they served. Secretary Hamilton was soon to be succeeded by William Jones, a Philadelphia merchant with a considerable knowledge of ships and seagoing men.

By the end of the first year of war, the American public had been reminded of war's excesses as well as its few opportunities for glory. It was to the credit of the American navy that the taste for victory had been whetted. Unfortunately, as 1813 was to show, success was as frequently elusive on sea as on land. One legacy of the year 1812 is that despite all the difficulties, a tradition of excellence was established in the naval service. Many of "Preble's Boys" had become men, and although the navy was small, it was admirably prepared for offensive operations in the Atlantic Theater.

U.S. Frigate *Essex* vs. H.M. Brig *Alert*

In an earlier though less famous action than Constitution-Guerriere, *Captain David Porter's* Essex *took the first British warship to fall to an American naval vessel in the War of 1812. The British had drawn first blood in an easy capture of Lieutenant William Crane's brig* Nautilus *on 16 July. Porter's capture of* Alert *was equally easy, and he makes it quite clear that the taking of a smaller ship of less force was no test of his capacity. Porter's egotism, however, was backed up by real ability. The list of his captures for the period 3 July to 3 September was sent to the secretary of the navy as an enclosure to his report on his engagement with* Alert.

Captain David Porter to Secretary of the Navy Hamilton

U S Frigate *Essex*
At Sea September 3d 1812

Sir,

I had the honor to address you on the 14th Augt by Lt [James P.] Wilmer, and on the 17th by an American Schooner, informing you briefly of my having captured H B M Sloop of War *Alert* commanded by T. [Thomas] L. P. Laugharne Esqr after an action of eight minutes-for the satisfaction of the Dept however, I now take the liberty of entering into a detail of particulars relating to that affair.

At 1/2 past 9 on the morning of the 13th Augt in Lat. 41°04' N.Long. 35°24' W. as we were standing to the Southd with the wind Westerly, discovered a square rigged Vessel to windward running down under a press of canvass evidently with a view of speaking us; as she approached supposed her to be a large arm'd English West Indiaman, as every means had been used to give her that appearance, and under this impression I considered it unecessary to call to general quarters, but took my usual precautions of having some of the Gun deck Guns cleared away, tapping in the half ports & tompions, & concealing every appearance of preparation-On her nearer approach, after she had made a signal to us and hoisted her colours, we sighted the English ensign & pendant. At 1/2 past 11 she was short pistol shot on our starboard quarter, I the discovered that she was a ship of War and prepared for action, and perceiving it to be their intention to rake us, I hoisted American colours wore short around, and after receiving his broadside, (which did us no more injury than the cheers that accompanyed it) brought our larboard Guns to bear, which compeled her to haul her wind on the starboard tack; we again wore, and by the time our starboard guns were brought to bear she was on the larboard tack: finding that the shortness of the enemy's ship gave him the advantage over us in close manoeuvering, and that he intended if possible to prevent our getting fairly along side of him, I determined to gain more room, and with this view stood on a wind on the starboard tack until the ships were separated about musket shot, then wore raking him in the act of wearing: he now attempted to make his escape, I consequently made more sail and was ranging up with the intention of not firing until there was a certainty that every shot would take effect, but when we were short pistol shot on his starboard quarter and had hoisted our flag bearing the Motto "free trade & Sailors rights" he avoided the dreadful consequences that our broad side would in a few moments have produced by prudentially striking his colours.

I sent Lt Jno Downes to take possession and on her commander coming on board and delivering up his sword, he informed me that the ship was sinking. I caused her to be wore around on the other tack to bring the shot holes above water and sent our carpenters to plug them up.

The *Alert* has suffered much in her hull, sail & rigging; she had two Guns disabled by us, three men badly wounded and two slightly–it was stated by her crew that she had nine men killed, and if they remained at their quarters during the firing, I cannot conceive (from examining the course and effect of our shot) how they could all have escaped.

The *Essex* has received a few musket & grape shots in her hull & sails, but the greatest injury she has sustained is in having her cabin windows broke by the concussion of her own guns.

The *Alert* with a select crew was cruizing with the view of intercepting the *Hornet*, and it is the source of regret to me that she did not fall in with that vessel instead of the *Essex*, as the forces would then have been more equal.

We are now well convinced notwithstanding Capt Binghams declaration that an English Sloop of War,[1] calculating on the Magic of the British name and Terror of British Thunder, has had the assurance to "commence attack within pistol shot on an American Frigate" for such (they informed us) they knew us to be, and have repeatedly reported, that had we been frenchmen they would either have taken us, or made their escape, with all due defference to the insuperability of British prowess, I believe that in their future naval contests with americans, they will be induced to apply some other rule to measure their resistance, than that employed to estimate the opposition of Frenchmen.

Nothing could have exceeded the zeal exhibited by the Officers & crew of this ship, and I cannot speak in too exalted terms of the conduct of the Marines and Topmen in annoying the enemy with their muskets while he was enabled to keep under our stern-his striking so soon was the cause of no small regret to the seamen as it deprived them of the opportunity of firing that broadside, on the effect of which they had so largely counted and of which the enemy was evidently so much in dread.

After getting the officers and greater part of the crew from the *Alert*, I sent Lt J P Wilmer on board as Prize Master with an intention of proceeding in company with her to America; but had I considered that she possessed as many good qualities as our own Ships of War, I should have sent Lt Downs [John *Downes*], and strongly have recommended him to you as her future commander. She will answer admirabley as a guard or block ship but not as a cruizer-After repairing her damages and finding her to sail badly, on the 18th Augt I concluded (as we had a great many prisoners on board and our provisions and water were getting short) to send her to St Johns in Newfoundland as a Cartel, therefore I proposed the terms contained in the enclosed papers to Capt Laugharne, which were accepted, and on the same day I dispatched her under the command of Lt Wilmer with the orders to proceed from thence to New York with such Americans as he may receive in exchange.

It would have afforded me much pleasure to have witnessed that liberality and strict sense of honor and propriety in the enemy after his surrender, that is so much the boast of Englishmen-So far from being guided by those laws of war that should govern the citizens and subjects of civilized nations, and particularly those of the Navy of Grat Britain, so celebrated for its strict discipline, no sooner had Capt Laugharne left his ship, than a scene of pillage and destruction was pursued by her crew, that would have disgraced a corsaire of Barbary-The Spirit room, pursers, and other store rooms were broken or thrown open, nor did the Captains Cabin & private stores escape, and such articles as could not be taken were broken, thrown overboard, and otherwis wantonly destroyed-But Sir, while I state those facts I fully acquit Capt Laugharne of any suspicion of having authorized, or being conserned in conduct so disgraceful & dishonorable to such as have, by a surrender, not only claimed the mercy and generosity of their vanquishers but have deceived them into a confidence of security against further acts of hostility-Although British pride may have been much humbled, such means of convincing us of the fact was of all others the most unjustifiable.

The *Essex* has sent into Port and destroyed since the 12th of July, nine of the enemies ships and Brigs, and the whole amount of property may be estimated at $300,000. she has also made 424 prisoners, some of whome have gone on parole, the rest have been sent off in Cartels to be exchanged, and during that time she has been off Bermudas, Halifax & St Johns in Newfoundland, and the Western Islands: Only one man has died during the cruize, and at this time she has not a man on board unable to do his duty-she has never at any time run from an enemy, nor has any endeavour been used to shun them, though frequently in the neighborhood of very superior force.

Copies of papers relative to every important transaction of the cruize accompany this letter. Also subjoined is a list of captures. I have the honor to be [&c.]

D Porter

List of Captures by the *Essex*

July 11th 1812	The Transport *Samuel & Sarah*, Captain L. T. Somes, conveying troops to Quebec: Ransomed
July 13th	Brig *Lamprey* Thos White Master from Jamaica bound to Halifax via Bermuda-Cargo Rum &c &c sent in Midn Haddiway [William H. *Haddaway*] Prize Master
July 26th	Brig *Leander* Jno: Bolsor Master, from Liverpool bound to Newfoundland: cargo Salt, Coal &c &c sent in Midn [George] Pearce Prize Master.
Augt 2d	Ship *Nancy* Edwd Stanworth Master from Gibraltar bound to Newfoundland-Cargo Salt, Coal &c &c: sent in Midn [Joseph L.] Biggs Prize Master.
" 2d	Brig *Hero*, Henry Gardner Master from Guernsey bound to Newfoundland, in ballast-Burnt!

″	3d	Brig *Brothers*, Richd Penny Master, having on board 62 Prisoners, captured by Capt Joshua Barney of the Schooner *Rossie* increased the number to 87 and sent her in as a Cartel to St Johns, Newfoundland under command of Midn [Stephen D.] McKnight[2]
″	8th	Brig *King George*, Jno: Alkinson Master from Pool bound to Newfoundland Cargo Salt &c &c–sent in Midn: [Richard] Dashiell Prize Master
″	9th	Brig *Mary* Jno Small Master, from Pool bound to Newfoundland, in ballast Burnt!
″	13th	Sloop of War *Alert* Capt S L P Laugharne sent to St Johns Newfoundland as a Cartel.

D.P.

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 12.

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[1] Commander Arthur Bingham, commanding officer of the British sloop of war *Little Belt*. See his letter to Vice Admiral Sawyer on pp. 41–43.

[2] See p. 218.

Discipline On Board Privateers

As seen in the case of the privateer Matilda *(pp. 191–92), discipline was occasionally lacking on board private armed ships. However, Captain Joshua Barney of* Rossie *had been an officer in the Continental Navy and was well aware of the importance of discipline for a successful cruise. Article 15 of the Instructions of Letters of Marque (see p. 169) had been framed for a purpose. Having put in at Newport at the end of his first successful cruise, Barney transferred to Master Commandant Oliver H. Perry two men whom he believed deserved trial by court martial. The following documents refer to this incident.*

Master Commandant Oliver H. Perry to Secretary of the Navy Hamilton

Newport Septr 3d 1812

Sir,

I have the honor to inclose you two letters from Capt Joshua Barney, commanding the private-armed Schooner *Rossie* requesting a court martial on John Nerborn & Thomas Holden-the latter it appears from the documents which I have in my possession as noted in the margin not only prove him to be an American Citizen, but that he has been in the Naval Service of the United States, and as Capt Barney alledges "a deserter from it." They are now in confinement onboard *No 46* where they will be kept until your pleasure is known.

I have been induced to take them in charge from the circumstance of the *Rossie* being about to sail, and looking upon one of them as a deserter from the Navy. It has not however escaped me Sir, that Capt Barney should have made this request direct to you. I am [&c.]

O.H. Perry

For the Margin please turn over-

Memn papers found on Thos Holden

No 1st Certificate of Citizenship dated at Philadelphia March 13th 1806 signed by Richard Bache Junr Clerk

2 Passport as citizen of the United States "having occasion to pass into foreign countries &c" dated July 3rd 1804 and signed by James Madison Secy of State

3 A Protection as an American Seaman & citizen of the U.S. granted by Sharp Delany (No.905) Collector of the District of Pensylvania March 28th 1797. Endorsed in the Margin "American Consulate London Feby 14th 1809 examined & approved Febury. Dickens, Chancellor.

4 A Letter dated Septr 7th 1802 from Richard Pitt directed to Mr. Holden,[1] [care of] commanding officer onboard the frigate *Ge. Greene* Washington [Navy Yard]

ALS, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 11.

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[1] Thomas Holden served as acting gunner on board *General Greene* in Nov. 1802. See Knox, *Barbary Wars* II: 316-17.

[Enclosure]
O.H. Perry Esqr

Newport R.I. Sept 2d 1812

Sir,

I have sent onboard your Vessel, a man by the name of Thomas Holden, he was taken by the private armed schooner *Rossie* under my Command, when Chief Mate of the British Ship *Jeanie* which ship Engaged me. I find by his papers that he is a Citizen of the U.S. and that he has been employed onboard of one of the public vessels, having taken him In Arms against his Country, I have thought proper to deliver him over to the Authority of the Country, & in consequence have sent him on board your Vessel and with him, the papers found in his Possession proving his Citizenship, to be dealt with according to Law. I am Sir [&c.]

Joshua Barney

ALS, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 11.

[Enclosure]
O.H. Perry Esqr

Newport R.I. Septr 2d 1812

Sir

By the inclosed Law of the U.S., Article 15, you will perceive the Mode pointed out for the trial of Offences committed onboard private Armed Vessels, In consequence of that Law, I have sent onbd the Vessel of the Commanding Officer, a man by the name of John Nerbon. This man is accused of Cowardice and flying from his Quarters in time of Action. I therefore beg, you will be pleased to order a Court Martial for the purpose of putting him on his trial, and am your [&c.]

Joshua Barney
Comr of P.A.S. *Rossie*

ALS, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 11.

Commodore Rodgers–Ready for Action

After returning from a long, disappointing voyage of many weeks duration, Commodore John Rodgers was alert to the possibilities for action. While preparing President *and* Hornet *for an upcoming cruise, Rodgers interrupted this work to prepare for action against H.M. frigate* Maidstone *which he understood was in the offing, outside Boston Bay. In amplification of his cruise report (pp. 262–66) Rodgers sent further suggestions on how U.S. Navy ships ought to cruise in the future and mentioned scurvy among the men of* President, *a fact known also to the British commander at Halifax (p. 497). The enclosure, from Oliver H. Perry, contains intelligence concerning a British squadron which had its own problems with scurvy.*

Commodore John Rodgers to Secretary of the Navy Hamilton

U.S. Frigate *President*
Boston Sept 4th 1812

Sir

A report having reached here yesterday, about one oclock, that an Action had taken place that morning off Cape Ann, between two Frigates supposed to be the *Essex* and British Frigate *Maidstone*. I had prepared to put to Sea this morning, with this Ship, the *United States*, and *Hornet*, in the expectation that if it had been the *Essex*, she would at least require assistance to get into port, the *Maidstone* being a much heavier Ship. After working all night, taking in Water & provisions, and having sent our Sick to the *Constitution* and *Congress*, and received effective men in their place, the report turns out to be entirely unfounded: This circumstance, I am sorry to say, will retard our equipment three or four days longer.

Permit me to suggest Sir for your consideration whether, when the Ships, at present here, are ready for Sea, it would not be advisable to go out in Squadron and afterwards seperate: By this means the Enemy will for a considerable time be kept in ignorance of the disposition of our vessels, and, in consequence, concentrate his force, to the advantage of our commerce. It will at the same time afford now and then an opportunity to our Frigates and theirs, of falling in singly, to our advantage, as I am satisfied they never will attack us in squadron, without a decidedly superior force, as fully appears from the character of the force with which they have appeared on our coast since I left New York.

The Communication of which the enclosed is a Copy I receved this morning. I had known however, a fortnight previous to my arrival here that the squadron, it mentions, was on our coast, and by refering to the Log-book I find we were on the 30th Ult where they are represented to have been two days.

I do not regret that we did not fall in with them, particularly as we had so many men confined with the Scurvy.

The men affected with the Scurvy are recovering very rapidly and I hope they will all be perfectly restored to health in twenty days at farthest: no time will be lost, you may be assured, in getting the Ships ready for Sea again: I feel extremely anxious to make up for time lost, at the first of the War.

I wrote you yesterday respecting the *Hornet*, she will be ready for Sea tomorrow or next day, and might make a cruise of a fortnight, and return by the time the other vessels are ready.

I am about ordering a survey on the *Constitution*, and apprehend she will require new lower masts: the other injuries she gained in the action, can be soon repaired. With the greatest respect [&c.]

Jn^{o} Rodgers

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 16.

[Enclosure]

[To John Rodgers] New Port Sept 3rd 1812
5 P.M.

Sir

By an arrival this moment at this place the Ship *Neptune* Captn Rolls from Liverpool in 30 days I am informed by Captn Williams a passenger, that they left the *Eolus* in company with the *Spartan*, *Maidstone*, and a Brig of War on Sepr 1st at 9 A.M. in Latd 41° 11′ Longd 69° 42′ in 50 fathoms water. the same evening they were joined by a large Ship which he supposed to be *Shannon*, making in all four Ships & a Brig-when last seen they were laying too, heads to the Eastd The whole squadron was short of water, and it was said were ordered to Halifax-many of the Crew of the *Eolus* had the Scurvey. It is supposed they had water for fifteen days. It was mentioned on board the *Eolus* that they intended to make an attempt on some port in the U. States for the purpose of Cutting out, preparations were making by mounting Swivels in the Boats &c These accounts is confirmed by several of the passengers

I have thought this information of sufficient importance to warrant me in sending an express to you I have therefore directed Mr [Stephen] Champlin Comdg Gun Boat *No 89* to proceed direct to Boston with this

18 of the *Eolus* Crew were down with the Scurvy.

Signed, O. H. Perry

Copy, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 16.

A Critical Report on the North Carolina Gunboats

Congressman William Blackledge, a representative from North Carolina in the 12th Congress (1811–1813), was a personal friend of Secretary Hamilton. While travelling to Washington, North Carolina, Blackledge discovered some irregularities in the performance of the U.S. Navy gunboats assigned to protect Ocracoke Inlet. He reports his discoveries in the following letter, in which he also comments on problems of supplying the navy in that location. Blackledge's political persuasion is apparent from opinions expressed in the postscript.

CONGRESSMAN WILLIAM BLACKLEDGE TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Washington N Carolina
Septr 4th 1812

Dear Sir,

On my arrival at this place, I find one of the Gun boats here, & learn that their Orders are to Cruise in the waters of Ocracock. Now before I left Newburn I found complaints that the Boats did not lie at Ocracock or in that neighborhood where they are wanted, but availing themselves of the latitude of their orders are almost always at Newburn or this place. The waters of Roanoake, Tar river & Neuse are considered by them as the waters of Ocracock because they discharge through that inlet, yet it is obvious no enemy can get into these rivers but through Ocracock Inlet. The use of Gun boats at Ocracock is to prevent an enemy comeing at that Inlet & to protect the vessels lying in that harbor. They would also be useful in preventing depredations upon the Citizens living on Ocracock & Portsmouth Banks, but to lie at Newburn, Washington or Edenton they would be of no earthly use. The two Orderd to Beaufort are arrived and will no doubt occupy their proper Stations at that town which is in sight of the Sea. Before I close this letter I beg leave further to mention that a few days past a vessel arrived at Newburn with Flour and Pork for the Gun boats, the Captain of which said he was orderd by the Navy Agent at Baltimore to deliver his Cargo to John P. Blount Esq. Mer. at this place (Washington). Yet you have a Navy Agent at Newburn Jerremiah Brown, and at Newburn Pork and flour are always 15 to 25 P Cent lower than at Norfolk. Then where is the policy of purchasing at a higher price in Norfolk, paying freight & shiping it round at the risque of Capture? These things are remarked upon by our enemies and our friends cant well ward off the effect of their observations. My sincere good wishes to the administration and particulary for you have incuced [*induced*] me to state this circumstances, and remain your sincere friend [&c.]

Wm. Blackledge

P.S.

Federalism has gained much ground in this State but there is never the less a considerable majority not less than 20 to 30 of republicans elected, so that unless some very untoward circumstances should occur in carrying on the war there can be no doubt but the whole votes of this State will be for Mr Madison. The letters of the New York Committee & their pamphlet in favor of [DeWitt] Clinton are very briskly circulatd here, & the federalists of this State will do their utmost to elect him, as the Essex Junto have determined to support him, & not to run any candidate of their own politics.[1]

W. B.

ALS, DNA, RG45, MLR, 1812, Vol. 6, No. 89.

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[1] Essex Junto: phrase coined by John Hancock to describe hardcore Federalists of New England led by Timothy Pickering. New York Republicans, led by DeWitt Clinton, opposed the reelection of President James Madison and won the support of many Federalists in their autumn campaign. *Address of the Republican Committee of the City of New-York. . . in Support of the Nomination of the Hon. DeWitt Clinton, to the Presidency*. . . [New York, 1812] was issued 17 Aug.

Joshua Humphreys's Advice

In September 1812, Congressman Adam Seybert from Philadelphia wrote former naval shipbuilder Joshua Humphreys with several questions regarding U.S. Navy ships. Humphreys's replies provide an interesting commentary on the state of the navy, Humphreys's notions of shipbuilding, and the United States' proposed building of 74-gun ships of the line. Humphreys's reputation had grown to large proportions since the days of the American Revolution. As the superintendent of a commercial shipyard in Philadelphia, he fitted out several vessels of the Continental Navy. In 1794, Humphreys was appointed the first "naval constructor" of the United States, and he is credited with having developed the basic plan for the 44-gun frigates which became the mainstay of the U.S. Navy from 1797 until 1815.

Although Humphreys was dismissed as naval constructor in 1801, he continued to take work on commission from the government, in particular, the building of a yard and dock for the U.S. Navy at Philadelphia in 1806. At the time Congressman Seybert asked his advice, Humphreys was in retirement on his farm near Chester, Pennsylvania. Seybert was a Republican member of Congress during the years 1809–1815 and 1817–1819; he was particularly interested in compiling *statistical data concerning expenditures and revenues of the United States, which he later published.*[1]

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[1] *Adam Seybert,* Statistical Annals embracing Views of the Population, Commerce, Navigation, Fisheries, etc. *(Philadelphia, 1818).*

JOSHUA HUMPHREYS TO CONGRESSMAN ADAM SEYBERT

[Extracts] Sept 5, 1812
Pentreading Farm Delaware County

Sir

I have received your letter of the 12th ulo and have endeavoured to convey to you facts and my Ideas on the different subjects as they have occurred to me, I should have sent you my answer sooner, but was prevented by my rural affairs.

Whether the naval establishment has been conducted with proper management, or with mismanagement I cannot say. I have endeavoured to explain as well as my recollection serves me, the manner it was conducted so far as it came under my notice, perhaps a comparrison with the present establishment may give some information.

However I may differ from the policy of the present administration, as an American, I shall nevertheless always be ready and willing to communicate to them the little experience I possess.

> The natural & Political capacity of the nation to create & maitain a Navy

On this question I can say but little, but I should suppose there could be no doubt on this subject, as this Country is the second greatest commercial nation in the world, and as we have heretofore derived all our revenue from commerce which is ample, and will increase if encouraged; therefore it is the interest of the U.S. to cherish & protect it; The resources of this country are in my opinion fully adequate to create and maintain a Navy: and money properly expended for that purpose would save more to this country, than if we were without a navy. The U.S. abound with every material, requisite for the building and equipping Ships of war.

The actual State & present management of the Navy of the U.S.

I can say little or nothing on this subject. The gun boats & some few other matters only have come under my notice. The Gun boats which have been built in this port, are in my opinion badly constructed and as badly executed. Gun Boats ought to be constructed for Shallow water and not larger than sufficient for our bays, they ought never to be sent into extensive waters, because the smaller and lighter they are built, so that they are large & strong enough to carry the men & metal they are intended for the better, The timber should be of the smallest size & out of timber grown to the mould. no timber should be put into them cut across the grain, because it is a useless weight, in fact it is a disadvantage as it adds weight without increasing the strength. The Cranes for the waste cloths ought to have been made in such a manner, that when done rowing, the Oars would swing directly fore and aft which is the best position for them when not in use, & they can more easily be resumed; The present mode, is when the Oars are not in use, to either run across the deck, or let them stick out from the side; In the first instance the oars must encumber the deck, and in the last are very liable to be broken.

The manner in which they are rigged is in my opinion, improper, from their construction & rig they cannot move against a head wind. If they were built light & of a proper construction & rigged with Lattean masts & Yards they could be rowed against any moderate breeze. The masts are short & when the sails are baild up, the yards are placed in a horozontal position so that their ends only are exposed to the wind; Another great advantage arises from the lattean sails, they will lay much nigher the wind than any other.

In order to bring to any point in a short time a number of Gunboats, and to make a much less number answer, say one half, and appropriate the sum the other half would cost, with the sum it would take to maintain them, to open an Inland navigation from St Marys River to Rhode Island, by this means the one half would be much more formidable than the whole is under the present unconnected state of the river & bays; Inland navigation would much facilitate the transportation of stores from one place to another. . . .

The best state in which it may be practicable to place it under existing circumstances.

I would recommend to call in all our small Cruisers and heavy sailing vessels and station them in our Rivers and Bays, and keep none out but the large Frigates, the *Essex* and any other of our vessels that sail fast.

> Of Timber what are the kinds of timber commonly used and the most approved for the construction of ships in the port of Philadelphia.

The timber that is now generally used in this port is white oak but sometimes they are built of Live oak & red Cedar, & generally the principle pieces are of Live Oak. The Timber which our Merchant Vessels were generally built of before the Revolution were White Oak, Live Oak & Red Cedar; Their floor & raising Timbers, Lower Futtocks, Knees & sometimes the beams were of white oak, the middle and upper Futtocks & toptimbers were of Live Oak and red Cedar, and all the rooms between the timbers and plank above the floor timber heads were filled with salt, which has by experience been found the best mode of preserving ships. But experience has convinced me that if ships were built with Live Oak floor & raising timbers & lower Futtocks and the upper timbers of white Oak taken green from the stump & well salted as the best methods of building Ships; the Sap of green timbers acts as conductors, by which means, the salt penetrates all the pores of the wood and soon displaces the sap. But If Ships are not to be salted, then It will be best to build them of timber seasoned under tight sheds. Timber seasoned in water looses much of its strength by the destruction of its [quitenous] substance & when taken out is very liable to rend and crack on being exposed in the air & is very brittle & short. . . .

> Is there at this time a provision of large and approved timber at the yards of Philadelphia

I will require about, 30,000 Cubic feet of timber for the frame of a large 70 or 80 Gun ship exclusive of plank wales &c. There has been delivered from 1800 to 1802 into the different Navy Yards cut expressly for the 74 Gun Ships the quantity annexed most of which I suppose may be on hand

Boston	40,036	Cubic feet
Portsmouth N.H.	18,706	ditto
New York	18,676	do

Norfolk	18,542	do
Philadelphia	20,426	do

Besides the Live Oak there was provided in this port Keel pieces, Kelsons, wales, &cc a large proportion of the live Oak knees were reshipped to Washington & also a number of white oak knees were procured here and sent on to the same place. I believe there are very few pieces of timber in the yards of Philadelphia that would be sutable for ships more than 500 tons. . . .

> Can ships of war be conveniently built in Philadelphia of what rates particularly

There is no port in the U.S. in which ships of war can be built more conveniently than in Philadelphia of any Rate that will be usefull for the United States, which I presume ought not to exceed double deck Ships on account of their harbours. The Ships built in this port are noticed in all parts of the world for their beauty and substantial workmanship, and are prefered to all others and have always commanded a frieght in preference to any other Vessels built in the U.S. and for the risque of the sea can be insured at a less premium. . . .

Should Government direct the building of the double deck Ships, I would by all means recommend the extension of their dimensions, the timber provided will admit of it & make them the most formidable double ships; by extending their dimensions you encrease their sailing. By building your ships of war larger and more powerful than they are in Europe you take a lead in two classes of ships (I mean double deck Ships & large Frigates) which will in a degree render the Ships of Europe of the same class in a very great degree useless, but if you build of the same size & construction you will allways be behind. it is only by taking a bold lead you have any chance of succeding: no necessary expence ought to be spared on this subject for it is one of the most important in the formation of our navy. The recent & last most brilliant affair of the Frigate *Constitution* confirms this opinion. The excellent qualities of our large Frigates, has confirmed the arguments I made use of in favour of their size. In drafting the 74 I had not the same lattitude, they are much smaller than I think they ought to be. . . .

> What time would be required to build a 74, in the port of Philadelphia admitting the necessary timber was already in

> the yard. What time is generally consumed for building a merchant ship of 300 tons do they last in proportion to the time employed in building

A 74 may be built in about 12 months if all the materials are provided, merchant ships generally take from 4 to 6 months. I do not [think] that it makes any difference as to the time in building. . . .

> Have you any knowledge of the premature decay of the Ships of war belonging to U.S. if yea, to what cause do you attribute it & what are the precautions you would recommend in future.

The first knowledge I had of the decay of our ships of war, was, in the year 1800, on board the Frigate *UStates*, about three years after she was Launched. Having been in the Habit of Salting all the Merchant Ships I built, I strongly pressed the necessity of salting the Frigate *U.S.* but it was opposed by Captain [John] Barry he stated it would make the ship damp & unhealthy, he carried his point: The want of this necessary precaution, was one reason why the cause of decay affected that part of the ship so much. I am convinced the decay was caused by the foul air of the ship & for want of a free circulation of fresh air, & I am confirmed in this opinion from the following facts. I found in taking off the plank that above almost every port cill where the foul air was in a great degree excluded, the plank was much less affected, and in some places not at all; the Brackets of the spare gun carriages which were laid in the hold, one on the other, the foul air lodged between them where I suppose there was little or no circulation, in this situation, that part of both brackets that laid on each other was decayed, when the other parts were sound, the reasons that these parts of the brackets, which were not affected, was In my opinion owing, to the air not being so confined, but had a circulation from many causes.

In the Frigate *Constellation* I found where the Bulk heads were nailed to the beams & where I conceived the foul air lodged & where the common movements in the vessel could give it little or no circulation, In these places I found the beams Rotten (not in the heart that part being sound, as is the case in all our large white Oaks they decay the first in the heart) on the outside this was the first instance of the kind I had ever met with, From these facts I am firmly persuaded the premature decay in our ships was caused by the foul air in the hold, & which I as firmly believe may be prevented by salt & sufficient ventelation.

To remedy the Evil in some degree in the *UStates*, I had hung between every Gun port a hangining port, with a communication from all the timbers between the Gun ports by a ralbit in the edges of the plank, in which there fixed a thin plank that was 1 1/2 inches clear of the timbers, through this opening I conceived the air would circulate, these ports kept constantly opening & shutting as the ship healed the weather side opening & the lee side shutting. If ships were to be salted there would be of no occasion for this precaution, neither would it have any good effect, as all the room between the timber would be filled with salt. wether the same precaution was made use of on board the *Constellation* while under repair I cannot say, nor what was the result of this on board the *U.S.* as I was discharged from the service before the *Constellation* was finished.

> Would you under any circumstances advise ships of war to undergo a thougrough repair, or do you deem it preferable to put them out of service when in a condition to need such repair.

Under some circumstances I would advise very considerable repairs where a ship has been found to be of superior construction where her qualities exceed any other ships, in such cases I should advise a repair if it would amount to the cost of a new vessel

In the merchant service I have always advised my employers, when their ships wanted considerable repairs to dispose of them, but with Government it is different their Old ships cannot be disposed of they are seldom suitable for merchants they are therefore under the necessity of giving their vessels heavy repairs. It is a very difficult point to ascertain the true state of a Ship even by the most experienced & disinterested persons. Officers some times press considerable repairs of their vessels, even should the cost exceed her value when she is repaired; for fear of loosing their command, and there are very few who have had sufficient experience to form correct opinions and so various are the opinions of commanders, that let the most experienced one of the navy have the fitting of a ship & then change the commander & if he has time and liberty will run the public to very considerable expence in alterations he will state to be absolutely necessary. True principles ought to be fixed upon by which all vessels belonging to the U.S. should be fitted and no alterations should be allowed, but what could be done with the crew of the ship without any additional Cost. There are certain considerations to be taken into view before an opinion could be formed wether great or extensive repairs ought to be gone into, particularly the relative cost & firmness when compleated & compared with that of a new one, than unless the advantage was very obvious & clear repairs ought not to be gone into; It is a fact that after the strictest examination & calculations made when you have taken out the defective parts first discovered you will always find more so that you never know the cost untill the repairs are compleated. . . .

Before I close this letter I will take the Liberty to state the duty assigned & performed by me under the Navy Department while Philadelphia was the seat of Government of the U.S. and the compensation allowed me; and where the greatest number of vessels of War belonging to the United States were fitted, It was a satisfaction to me to be informed by Mr Stoddard [Benjamin *Stoddert*] Secretary of the Navy, that the vessels were always fitted more expeditiously and at much less expence than in any other port in the U.S. . . .

Joshua Humphreys

The Honl Adam Seybert

Copy, PHi, Joshua Humphreys Papers, 1682-1835, Letterbook 1800-1835, pp. 99-114.

A Narrow Escape

Captain David Porter was returning to port after a successful cruise off the Grand Banks when he encountered and was chased by three enemy warships. He fell in with them off Georges Bank, a rich fishing ground northeast of Cape Cod. The following document is his report to the secretary of the navy. Essex *sailed into Delaware Bay and put in at Chester, Pennsylvania, for a layover of almost seven weeks. Porter's next assignment was to sail with* Constitution *and* Hornet *under Commodore Bainbridge.*

CAPTAIN DAVID PORTER TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

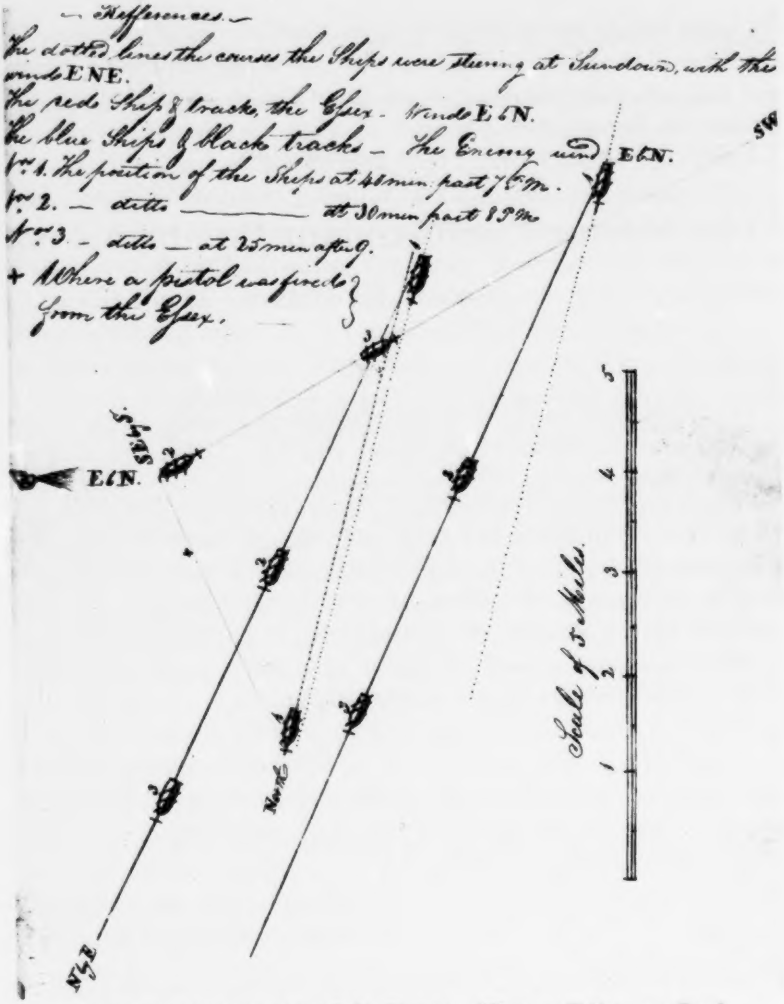
U.S. Frigate *Essex*
At Sea Sept 5th 1812

Sir,

On the 4th inst off the tail of St. Georges Bank I discoverd two Ships of War to the Southd and a Brig to the Northd-the Brig in chace of an American Merchant Ship, and I have not the slightest doubt of their being enemies[1]-gave chace to the Brig which attempted to get past us to join the rest of the squadron, this we prevented and compelled her to stand to the Northd continued in chace until we got abrest the American Ship when we gave over chace as the wind was getting light and the Brig leaving us with her sweeps out-On shewing our colours to the American Merchant Ship several signal guns were fired by the ships to the southward which made all sail in chace of us. At 4 PM they had gained our wake and had come up with us very fast, calculating on making my escape by some manoeuver in the course of the night, I hoisted American colours and fired a Gun to Windward; the ships still continuing to gain on us and the largest being considerably to windward of the other and about 5 miles a stern of us bearing S. by W. I determined to heave about as soon as it grew dark, and, in the event of our not being able to pass him, to fire a broad side into him and lay him on board; with this view made every arrangement and preparation the crew in high spirits & gave three cheers when the plan was proposed to them-At 20 minutes after 7 hove about and stood S E by S (the wind heading us off the moment we hove in stays) until 30 minutes after 8, when we bore away SW without seeing any thing more of them, which seems the more extraordinary as a pistol was fired by accident on board this ship at the moment when we must have been at our shortest distance from them. Finding myself thus cut off from New York and Rhode Island, I made the best of my way for the Delaware.

Considering this escape as a very extraordinary one, I have the honor to enclose you a sketch of the position of the ships at three different periods, by which you will perceive at once the plan of effecting it.[2] I have the honor [&c.]

D Porter



— References. —

The dotted lines the courses the Ships were steering at Sundown, with the winds E NE.

The reds Ship & tracks, the Essex - Winds E b N.

The blue Ships & black tracks — The Enemy wind E b N.

No. 1. The position of the Ships at 40 min. past 7 P.M.

No. 2. — ditto ——— at 30 min past 8 P.M.

No. 3 - ditto — at 25 min after 9.

+ Where a pistol was fired from the Essex. —

Captain Porter's Sketch of the Escape of Essex off Georges Bank, 4 September 1812

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 18.

[1] According to James, *Naval History*, V, 367–68, the "two Ships of War" were *Shannon* and recaptured merchant ship *Planter*.

[2] The enclosure is filed with the letter. See illustration, p. 463.

The Marine Commandant Comments on Naval Events

In replying to Captain Archibald Henderson's report on the cruise of President, *Commodore Rodgers's flagship, Lieutenant Colonel Commandant Franklin Wharton remarked on the service of marines on board ship during the summer of 1812. His letter, which follows, shows his sense of loss in the death of Lieutenant William S. Bush of* Constitution*'s marine guard and his concern for detail in providing clothing for marines on shipboard. The marines available for duty were few compared to the new demands placed upon the corps, consequently reassignments were frequent as some ships returned from cruises while others prepared to weigh anchor.*

LIEUTENANT COLONEL COMMANDANT FRANKLIN WHARTON, U.S.M.C., TO CAPTAIN ARCHIBALD HENDERSON, U.S.M.C.

H. Q. of the Marine Corps
Washington, Septr 7th 1812

Sir!

I congratulate you on the return of the Squadron, & I hope the Cruise has restored your Health, of which you have said nothing in your last communications to me.[1]

I had heard, as you may suppose with great pleasure, the brilliant act of Capt Hull, which has done much for our Country, & I trust will do something for its Navy. The loss we have to lament in the fall of our late brother officer Bush is severe; but as a Military Man he has gained by it–he has left an example worthy of Imitation, & his Memory will be cherished so long as heroic Acts are valued.

Your reports will be attended to on the Books of the Adjt in regard to the loss of your Men, & the promotions you have made are confirmed.

Commodore Rogers will be made acquainted, if not already so, of the relief in the Squadron of two officers of the Corps, yourself and Lieut [Henry H.] Forde. it will be of course most advisable that you immediately prepare yourselves to deliver the Guards to the officers ordered to relieve you, & who have been in New York for some months. They are Capt [Robert] Greenleaf, & Lieut [William] Strong. Whenever the relief has been made you will receive the Guard of Marines at Boston, or rather Charlestown from Lieut [James] Broom, who will remain with you for some time there, to assist you. The moment Lieut Forde is relieved order him to proceed to New York, with all dispatch, & report himself to Capt [John] Hall, as I have for him a Command which will be very desirable-indeed if it were possible I should be very happy for Lieut Forde to proceed there on receipt of this-by the consent of the Commodore.

I find you have been by your unexpected departure from N. York-very deficient in Clothing. I have had placed there supplies for you, & have now directed Capt Hall to forward, whatever he can, with all dispatch-some Articles he cannot have on hand. I must therefore request you to contract for the delivery of 150 Uniform Coats-150 Pair of Gaiters, & 500 pair of Shoes on the best terms, & to be as early as possible furnished for the use of the Squadron. The form, or pattern of each, of the two former Articles, you can furnish, with the quality of the Cloths, & I presume you can buy them in Boston, as cheap as in New York. For the Coats I there pay 8:50 each. I cannot however limit you in the prices; you must make the Contract; & the Contractors will be paid through the Navy Agent, who will be instructed so to do. The Agent I presume could assist you much in this business. I am [&c.]

F. Wharton

Capt Archibald Henderson
Commandg Marines, of the *President*
Boston

Copy, DNA, RG127, CMC, Letters Sent.

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1. Archibald Henderson, commissioned 2nd lieutenant on 4 June 1806, was promoted 1st lieutenant on 6 Mar. 1807, and captain 1 Apr. 1811. He was appointed lieutenant colonel commandant of the Marine Corps in 1820, rose in rank to brevet brigadier general, and served as commandant until his death in 1859. He was, at the time this letter was written, commanding officer of *President*'s marine detachment.

Repairs for War-Damaged Frigates

The Boston navy agent was in a key position to expedite the supply of goods and services for warships and naval personnel. On 23 January 1812, Secretary Hamilton informed Amos Binney that he had been appointed to this position and that for his services he would receive a commission of 1 percent on all naval expenditures.[1] *But when the war began, the amount of work that fell to the navy agent was staggering, particularly at Boston, the port closest to the scenes of naval action.*

Binney described his initiation as a wartime naval agent in an account published in 1822:

> *In Aug. or Sept. [1812] the whole squadron came into port. Every ship required complete supplies of provisions and every kind of stores. I was but newly appointed, had no experience, no precedents, no forms, no instructions; was obliged to form a whole system from the chaos that surrounded me, was always short or wholly destitute of funds. I resorted to the banks and to my friends for money on loans and on interest, was soon overwhelmed with requisitions from the public ships in every department–pursers, boatswains, carpenters, gunners, armourers; and frequently had half a dozen midshipmen, with as many boats' crews, calling for stores, &c. I could not be with, or serve everyone at once; hence was obliged to confide much of the business in detail to persons I believed honest and faithful.*[2]

The following order, concerning the finances of repairing warships damaged in battle, arrived on Binney's desk at the very time described above.

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[1] *Hamilton to Binney, 23 Jan. 1812, DNA, RG45, MLS, Vol. 11, pp. 28–29 (and enclosure). For further orders, see Hamilton to Binney, 19 Feb., DNA, RG45, MLS, Vol. 11, p. 40.*

[2] Documents relative to the Investigation, by Order of the Secretary of the Navy, of the Official Conduct of Amos Binney, United States Navy Agent at Boston, upon the Charges made by Lieutenant Joel Abbot and Others, *"Published by the Accused" (Boston, 1822), pp. 60–61.*

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON TO NAVY AGENT AMOS BINNEY

Amos Binney Esqr
Boston

Navy Depart
8 Septr 1812

Your letter of 31 ulto has been received.

On account of pay of the Navy 10,000$: on account of provisions 10,000$: on account of medicines 2,000$ and on account of contingencies 1000$-I have this day directed a warrant to be issued in your favor, agreeably to your requisition.

You require "For Repairs 4,000$." The repairs of the frigates *Constitution* & *President*, as both those vessels have been damaged in action, must be paid for out of the appropriation for "repairing our vessels of war, that may be damaged in action"; and under this head you will be pleased to make your requisitions for all monies required for the repair of the frigates *Constitution* & *President*, and for the repair of all other of our public vessels that may arrive at Boston under similar circumstances-that is requiring repairs of damages sustained in action with the enemy.

That no inconvenience may arise to the public Service, and as you will certainly want more the [*than*] 4000$ for the repairs of the frigates *President* & *Constitution*, I have directed you a remittance of Ten thousand dollars, out of the appropriation for "Repairs of vessels damaged in action."

We are extremely anxious to get all our public vessels to Sea, with the least possible delay-and we confidently hope, that every assistance on your part, will be promptly rendered, to effect this desireable object.

For Paul Hamilton
C: W: Goldsborough

Pay.	10,000
Provisions	10,000
Medicine	2,000
Contingent	1,000
Repairs of vessels damaged in action	10,000
	$33,000

Copy, DNA, RG45, MLS, Vol. 11, pp. 142-43.

The Porter-Bainbridge Friendship

On returning from his cruise, David Porter wrote Commodore Bainbridge of his successes and added some personal comments. Porter had served as Bainbridge's first lieutenant on board the frigate Philadelphia *when she grounded off Tripoli in 1803. He had shared the trials of imprisonment at the hands of the Tripolitans with Bainbridge, and the two officers remained close friends for many years afterwards.*

CAPTAIN DAVID PORTER TO COMMODORE WILLIAM BAINBRIDGE

U.S. Frigate *Essex* Mouth of Delaware
Sept 8th 1812

Dear Sir

I have the good fortune to inform you of my safe arival here and of the success of my cruise I have no cause to complain, for although I have not benefited myself much, I have the satisfaction to reflect that I have been a great anoyance to the Enemy-I have taken in the mouths of their Harbors eight of their merchant vessels, and one of their sloops of war, the latter fought me 8 minutes-Two of the Merchantmen I burnt-two or three days ago they gave me a hard chace and were very near catching me I however gave them the dodge in the night-I have made 220 prisoners and the injury I have done them in less than 2 months may be fairly estimated at 300,000$ I hope however to have another slap at them ere long that will gall them still more-I do not know whether my prizes have arived as I have not yet had any news from shore-This is written in haste by an officer that goes in a passing vessel. I know you will expect a letter from me and I am confident that you will be much pleased to hear of any of my good fortune and indeed it would be unpardonable in me to let slip the first oportunity of droping you a line-I should be much gratified to hear from you as early as possible and feel much solicitude as to your future intentions. Do you not intend having a dash at them? How do you like Boston? How is Mrs Bainbridge pleased with it? Give my warmest regards to her, my love & kisses to Miss Susan and the Little ones and accept assurances of my unalterable friendship & Esteem[1] Yours &c.

D. Porter

Comre. Wm Bainbridge

I am all anxiety to see my little rib[2]-I left her unwell and many a bitter and anxious moment I have felt on her account-When I get home I shall write you more fully-I think it not improbable my repairs may keep me in port 3 weeks-

ALS, Navy Department Library, Special Collections, Naval Historical Center, Washington, D.C.

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[1] Susan Heyliger Bainbridge and Susan Parker Bainbridge.

[2] Evalina Anderson Porter.

Further Instructions to John Mitchell

By a letter of 26 August, the secretary of the navy sent instructions to John Mitchell regarding his duties as American Agent for Prisoners of War at Halifax. Realizing that these instructions had been framed too broadly, giving too much discretion to the man on the scene, Hamilton's next letter to Mitchell narrowed his field of action.

Secretary of the Navy Hamilton to John Mitchell

John Mitchell Esq.
Philadelphia

Navy Depart
8 Septr 1812

In the letter of instructions addressed to you under date 26. ulto you were informed that it would "be your duty to discuss & arrange with the proper authority all points in relation to the exchange of prisoners."

This instruction was given to you under the erroneous impression, that it was the intention of the President of the United States, to invest you with full power to discuss and definitively adjust the principles of exchange-Having communicated with the Secretary of State upon the subject, I find, that the objects of your appointment were "to promote an exchange of prisoners, to supply their wants and to facilitate their return to the United States" leaving the principles of Exchange to be settled by Commissioners hereafter to be appointed for that purpose.

So far therefore, as the instructions under date the 26th ulto may be considered as conferring upon you the power of discussing or adjusting any principle, upon which the exchange of prisoners shall be made you will consider them as hereby revoked. I am Sir [&c.]

for Paul Hamilton
C: W: Goldsborough

Copy, DNA, RG45, MLS, Vol. 11, p. 142.

Squadron Cruising Orders

Shortly after the return of the combined squadrons of Commodore Rodgers and Decatur, preparations began for a second cruise. The results of the U.S. Navy's activity during the summer of 1812 seemed to indicate that ships cruising independently inflicted more damage on the enemy than those cruising in large squadrons. The success of Constitution *and* Essex *were remarkable in this respect. Rodgers himself suggested in his letter to the secretary of 4 September that U.S. Navy ships sortie in squadron strength to deceive the enemy, then operate separately. Secretary Hamilton's subsequent orders show a compromise between squadron and independent operations. Three small squadrons were to be formed with considerable latitude allowed the commodores as to cruising grounds. As most of the ships intended for these squadrons were refitting and were in different ports, some time passed before they were ready to sail in force.*

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON TO COMMODORE JOHN RODGERS

Comre Rodgers Nav: Dapt 9 Septr 1812
Boston

It has been determined that our vessels of war shall be divided into three small Squadrons to be commanded by yourself in the frigate *President*, Comre Bainbridge in the frigate *Constitution* & Comre Decatur in the frigate *United States*;[1] for the present, each Squadron will consist of two frigates, & a small brig. when ready for sea each Squadron will be instructed to pursue that course, which to the commanding officer, may, under all circumstances, appear the most expedient to afford protection to our trade & to annoy the enemy; returning into port, as speedily as circumstances will permit, consistently with the great objects in view & writing to the Department by all propere oppertunities

In arranging these Squadrons reference must be made to the relative rank of the respective commanding officers, & to the properties of the respective vessels-In paying every proper respect to rank we must not forget the great importance of selecting vessels for each of the squadrons, as nearly equal in the property of sailing & in capacity of burthen, as may be practicable: The three small vessels that will be attached to the squadron, will be commanded by Capt [Jacob] Jones Capt [James] Lawrence & Capt [Arthur] Sinclair: & they are to be attached to the Squadrons in the order of their rank. That is to say-Capt Jones will join Comre Rodgers; Capt Lawrence will join Comre Bainbridge-& Capt Sinclair will join Comre Decatur. The three frigates to be attached to the Squadrons (besides those to be commanded by the commodores themselves) will be the *Chesapeake*-the *Congress* & the *Essex*- & with respect to these frigates the commanders will consult the good of the Service & decide for themselves, if found necessary, & the good of the service will permit, they will choose in the order of their relative rank; that is Comodore Rodgers will choose first, Comre Bainbridge next & Comre Decatur will take the third-In making the arrangment, You will also have proper reference to the periods when the respective vessels will probably be ready for service, it being important that the whole should proceed to sea, as early as may be practicable.

The *Essex* & the *Wasp* are expected in daily-& unless they should meet with some untoward accident, they will, in a day or two, after their arrival be again prepared for service.

The commanders will give every requisite order for carrying into effect the objects of these instructions & having made the necessary arrangments, each will give every necessary attention to the outfit of his Squadron.

P. Hamilton

Copy, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 10, pp. 146-47.

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1. Identical letters were sent to Commodores Bainbridge and Decatur; see Hamilton to Bainbridge, 9 Sept. 1812, DNA, RG45, CNA, Vol. 1, pp. 329-30 and Hamilton to Decatur, 9 Sept. 1812, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 10, pp. 144-45.

Special Praise for Captain Hull

Secretary Hamilton's terse letters usually contained few words of praise for his officers. The victory of Constitution *over* Guerriere, *however, was such welcome news that he fairly deluged Captain Isaac Hull with gratitude. Material rewards in the form of prize money were forthcoming, as well as promotions and favorable reassignments for Hull and his officers. For personal reasons, Hull requested duty ashore and was assigned to the New York Navy Yard. His first lieutenant, Charles Morris, received a generous promotion. Hamilton's enthusiam for Hull and his men is evident in the following letter.*

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON TO CAPTAIN ISAAC HULL

Capn Isaac Hull
Boston

Nav: Depm't
9 Sept 1812

I have it in special charge from the secretary of the Navy to express to you & through you to the officers & crew of the frigate *Constitution* the very high sense entertained by him of your & their distinguished conduct in the late action with his Britanick Majesty's frigate the *Gueriere*. In this action, we know not which most to applaud, Your gallantry or Your skill-You, Your officers & Crew are entitled to & will receive the applause & the gratitude of Your gratefull country.

Your officers will not be neglected by this Department-Their distinguished merits entitle them to special attention.

Transmit to me the name of that excellent Man, who has lost his leg-Express my condolence in his misfortune. He shall immediately have a pension-You will also favor me with the name of that distinguished Hero "who, in the heat of the action, on seeing the flag at your foretopmast head shot away went up & lashed it in such a manner as to make it impossible for shot to take it away, without taking the mast"-& You will make to him some suitable present not exceeding value one months pay, as a testimony of the approbation of his country.

Express to Lt. Morris my high admiration of his conduct & my sincere hope, that he will speedily restored to health & further honor.

The Death of Lt. [William S.] Bush of marines is deeply regretted-He died nobly.

P. Hamilton

Copy, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 10, pp. 148-49.

Arrangements for Prisoner Exchange

Prisoner of War Agent John Mitchell, soon to depart for his mission at Halifax, responded harmoniously to Secretary Hamilton's restriction of his powers as agent. In the following letter, Mitchell shows that he has rapidly grasped the principal responsibilities of his new position.

JOHN MITCHELL TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Philadelpa
9th Septr 1812

Sir,

I had the honor of writing You Yesterday, and today that of receivg your letter of the 8th revoking that part of Your Instructions of the 26th Ulto which made it "my duty to discuss and arrange with the proper Authority all points in relation to the exchange of Prisoners."

and shall conform to your desire and follow the instructions I received this day from the Secrety of State.

I have to acquaint you with my having seen Mr [Anthony St. John] Baker today, & am to see him again Tomorrow.

Should he persist in sending the British prisoners to Halifax under Contract as he mentioned to me today, instead of chartering a vessell and furnishing regular Rations to the Men I will loose no time in engaging a vessel to proceed to Halifax that will be Capable to bring back two hundred or more of our Men, as such a vessell will not be as expensive in proportion as one which will carry only 100 men.

As there is only about 40 Prisoners here Mr Baker wont look for a vessel capable of carrying a larger Number & that trifleing exchange will not meet the vieus of our Goverment.

Tomorrow I shall have the Honor of Writing you again on the subject, I am [&c.]

John Mitchell

ALS, DNA, RG45, MLR, 1812, Vol. 6, No. 99.

Supply Problems on the Charleston Station

A ship's purser during the War of 1812 carried out duties which more recently have been allotted to a ship's supply officer. All items related to the needs of shipboard personnel, such as pay, clothing, and food, fell within the scope of the purser's responsibilities. He had to procure, disperse, and account for these items. Usually, the purser of a ship would deal with the navy agent of his station for the procurement of these necessities. Occasionally, however, when local goods or services of a certain type were not available or were not acceptable, he would request permission of the secretary of the navy to make a purchase outside the system. In the following letter, Purser Satterwhite of the U.S. brig Vixen *discusses his needs in this regard.*

PURSER EDWIN T. SATTERWHITE TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

U.S. Brig *Vixen*
Charleston, Rebellion Roads
11th Sep 1812

Honorable Sir,

The extreme bad quality of Cloth, of which the Winter Cloathing for the men belonging to the *Vixen* were furnished last year, produced murmurings by no means agreeable. This year, it would appear, will be more difficult in procuring them. I have visited throughout Charleston, and I find that Cloathing, which is very bad, commands an exhorbitant price. I have therefore, Sir, thought it adviseable to request of you permission to let me get them of Messrs Winn & Butler of New York, as Mr [Gwinn] Harris, Purser St Mary's Station, assures me that they can be procured of a quality much superior to those in Charleston, and at prices below those heretofore paid.

I have taken the liberty to enclose a Letter for Mr Silas Butler; in which I have requested him to call on you.

The inhabitants of Charleston are very sickly; and two or three cases of Yellow Fever have occurred; owing it is supposed to the heavy falls of Rain, and the stagnant water which has been permitted to remain in Cellars, &c. You have no doubt heard of the Death of our worthy Commander, Captn Gadsden[1]-his Son, about 18 months old expired a few days after. The family are the most distressed I ever saw. I had the pleasure of conversing with Col. Waring a few days since; he stated your family to be in perfect health.

You will have the goodness, Sir, to forward my instructions relative to the Winter Cloathing. I have the honor [&c.]

Edwin T. Satterwhite

ALS, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 34.

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[1] Christopher Gadsden died 28 Aug. 1812.

The Return of the *Nautilus*'s Crew

Captured on 16 July, Lieutenant William Crane, with his officers and men, was held prisoner at Halifax until arrangements for parole could be made. On his return to the United States, Crane reported to Commodore Rodgers who forwarded documents relating to Crane's confinement to the secretary of the navy. The following items include Lieutenant Crane's letter announcing his arrival at Boston and Commodore Rodgers's letter of transmittal and an enclosure in the form of a safe conduct for the cartel passengers.

LIEUTENANT WILLIAM M. CRANE TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Boston 11 Sept 1812

Sir

I have the honor to acquaint you with the arrival at this port of the officers & crew of the late U.S. Brig *Nautilus* in the *Dart* Cartel. I have laid before Comdre Rodgers the Correspondence between Admiral Sawyer and myself relative to the treatment of my crew, and thro' him all the documents which are thought in any way necessary for the information of the Department will be forwarded.

I have on the part of myself, my officers, and crew requested Commodore Rodgers to convene a court of enquiry before the seperation of the Ships Company, to investigate and examine into the causes which have led to the loss of the late U.S. Brig *Nautilus*[1] respectfully [&c.]

W. M. Crane

ALS, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 37.

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[1] For the proceedings of the Court of Inquiry on Lieutenant Crane's conduct in the loss of *Nautilus*, held on 26 Sept. 1812 on board *United States* in Boston harbor, see DNA, RG125, Records of the Office of the Judge Advocate General (Navy), (Records of General Courts Martial and Courts of Inquiry of the Navy Department, 1799-1867), Vol. 3, No. 119.

Commodore John Rodgers to Secretary of the Navy Hamilton

U.S. Frigate *President*
Boston Sept 12th 1812

Sir,

I have the honor to acquaint you that Lieut Wm. M. Crane, late Lieut Comdt of the late U.S. Brig *Nautilus* arrived here (in a Cartel from Halifax) yesterday, with the officers and crew of that vessel

Lieut Crane, his officers, and crew have been liberated on parole, or rather conditionally exchanged, as you will perceive by the inclosed paper No. 1, for a certain number of Officers and Soldiers, taken by the U.S. Frigate *Essex*, and sent to Halifax

The crew of the *Nautilus* I shall distribute among the different U. States vessels, at present here, under the presumption that yourself and the Secretary of War will assent to the proposed exchange, the Enemy having acknowledged the receipt of an equivalent number of British Officers & Soldiers, captured by the *Essex*, and which now only requires the consent of yourself, and the Secretary of War, to render the exchange effected

I shall, nevertheless, from motives of delicacy, connected with the strictest obligation of the intention of a parole of honor, consider the Officers of the *Nautilus* as merely on that parole, consequently not employ any of them on service against the Enemy, until I hear from you

Lieut Crane has requested me to signify to you his desire to have his conduct investigated, touching the capture of the *Nautilus*, as early as it may be convenient for you to give an order for the same

With the enclosed paper No 1 I herewith forward for your consideration certain others, relating most particularly to the detention of six of the *Nautilus*'s crew, who have been sent to England for examination & trial, under pretence of their being British subjects

For the six men, detained as above stated, I have detained 12 of the *Gurrier*'s crew, and shall cause the same to be kept in confinement until I receive your orders respecting them

You will, no doubt, readily perceive, Sir, the propriety of my orders for the detention of these men, as a retaliatory pledge for the return of those so insultingly taken from the *Nautilus*: should I, however have mistaken the policy of our government, or misconstrued our rights as a Belligerent, I hope it will be attributed to proper motives-a real wish to serve my Country, and an earnest desire to protect her rights

You will perceive, Sir, that there are also included in the exchange, or parole, No. 1, Two Midshipmen & five seamen belonging to the U.S. Frigate *Essex*, who were recaptured in a prize. Seven seamen recaptured in a prize to the U.S. Frigate *Constitution*, and one midshipman & four men belonging to the U.S. Brig *Argus*, recaptured in a prize to the squadron under my command, all of whom are placed in the same situation, as respects their exchange, that those the *Nautilus* are I have the honor to be [&c.]

Jn^{o} Rodgers

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 43.

[Enclosure]

By His Excellency Lieutenant General Sir John Coape Sherbrooke KB Lieutenant Governor and Commander in Chief in and over His Majesty's Province of Nova Scotia and its Dependencies &c &c &c and by Herbert Sawyer Esquire Vice Admiral of the Blue, and Commander in Chief of His Majesty's Squadron on this Station
&c &c &c

To
All unto whom these presents shall come

Greeting

Whereas the several persons who are particularly named and described in the Schedule hereunto annexed are Citizens of the United States of America have been captured by the Ship of His Majesty subsequent to the Declaration of War on the part of the United States against Great Britain and Whereas we are willing that the said Persons should be released and restored to their Native Country in Exchange for the like Number of British Subjects who are or may become Prisoners of War in the United States of America and for that purpose have given to the said Prisoners our Permission to proceed from hence under a Flag of Truce to the Port of Boston in order to preserve that courtesey and good understanding which should subsist between Nations on all such occasions and in full confidence and trust of receiving a Like Number of British Subjects who are or may become Prisoners in the United States in Exchange for them. Now be it known that this Passport and safe conduct is hereby given by us to the said several persons beforementioned in order that they may forthwith proceed without hindrance or molestation in the Brig *Dart* whereof Rammage[1] is Master under a Flag of Truce as aforesaid We having every reason to conclude that the said Flag will meet with all due respect and consideration from the Government of the United States and all persons at sea or on shore belonging to the said Goverment

And we do hereby order and direct all His Majesty's subjects within this Province and to all Commanders of His Majesty's Ships and vessels on this Station to permit and suffer the several persons beforementioned to proceed on their said voyage to Boston in the said Brig without any hindrance interruption or molestation whatever of their persons or property and to use them kindly and courteously wheresoever they shall be found. In Testimony and Confirmation whereof we have with our hands signed these presents and caused them to be sealed with our Seals, Dated at Halifax this 1st day of September in the 52d Year of His Majesty's Reign and in the Year of our Lord 1812.

J. C. Sherbrooke[2]
H. Sawyer

By His Excellencys Command
H. H. Cogswell
D. Secy

DS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 43.

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[1] James Ramage, later sailing master, USN (as of 1 June 1813).

[2] Lieutenant General Sir John Coape Sherbrooke (1764-1830), Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia, 1811-1816.

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[Enclosure]

PORT
OF
HALIFAX

LIST of. AMERICAN Prisoners of War discharged out of the Custody of LIEUTENANT WM MILLER Agent at the said Port.[1]

Current Number.	Name of Prize.	Whether Man of War, Privateer, or Merchant-Vessel	Prisoners' Names.	Quality.	Time When discharged	Whither, and by what Order[2]
					1812	
1	*Nautilus*	Man of War	W. M. Crane	Commander	3 Septr	
	"	"	Thos. Babbitt	Lieutt	"	
	"	"	Foxhall A. Parker	ditto	"	
	"	"	Benjn. P. Kissim	Surgeon	"	
5	"	"	Jas. P. Sigourney	Master	"	
	"	"	Geoe. Russel	Mrs. Mate	"	
	"	"	W. H. Chaile	Midn	"	
	"	"	Chas. L. Williamson	ditto	"	
	"	"	Peter Joseph	Gunner	"	
10	"	"	Simpson Shaw	Ships Stewd	"	
	"	"	Edwd. Greenwell	Midn	"	
	"	"	Edgar Freeman	ditto	"	
	"	"	Fras. Whinsickle	Servant	"	
	"	"	James Collins	ditto	"	

15	"	"	Chas. Sewell	ditto	"
	"	"	Josh. Colston	Seaman	"
	"	"	Warner Breed	"	"
	"	"	James Colter	Clerk	"
	"	"	Christn Smith	Boats Mate	"
20		"	Chas Middleton	Boatswain	"
21	"	"	Richd Declure	Sl Maker	"
	"	"	Abm Dermitt	Carpr	"
	"	"	Fredk Frail	Seaman	"
	"	"	Ledger Stout	"	"
25	"	"	Rueben Williamson	"	"
	"	"	John Conner	"	"
	"	"	Hugh Dougherty	"	"
	"	"	John Simpson	"	"
	"	"	Thos Baker	"	"
30	"	"	Josh Moody	"	"
	"	"	John Howe	"	"
	"	"	Willm Jackson	"	"
	"	"	Peter Quarnteen	"	"
	"	"	John Wallace	"	"
35	"	"	Franklin Bull	"	"
	"	"	Thos B Hatherly	"	"

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Current Number.	Name of Prize.	Whether Man of War, Privateer, or Merchant-Vessel	Prisoners' Names.	Quality.	Time When discharged	Whither, and by what Order[2]
	Nautilus	Man of War	Wilson Denight	Seaman	1812 3 Septr	
	"	"	Elisha Painters	"	"	
	"	"	Robt W Edgehill	"	"	
40	"	"	Thos Harding	"	"	
	"	"	Heny Foster	"	"	
	"	"	James Butler	"	"	
	"	"	John Watson	"	"	
44	"	"	Willm Thomas	"	"	
45	"	"	Thos S Dyer	"	"	
	"	"	James Terney	"	"	
	"	"	Fras Gray	"	"	
	"	"	Green Camp	"	"	
	"	"	John Reed	"	"	
50	"	"	Willm Wheaton	"	"	
	"	"	Daniel Thomas	"	"	
	"	"	Chas Allan	"	"	
	"	"	John Duffie	"	"	
	"	"	Caesar Black	"	"	
55	"	"	Thomas Thompson	"	"	

	〃	〃	Josh Pechoa	〃	〃
	〃	〃	Josh Goodall	〃	〃
	〃	〃	Jno Williamson	〃	〃
	〃	〃	John Brown	〃	〃
60	〃	〃	Sylvester Stacey	〃	〃
	〃	〃	Christr Haile	〃	〃
	〃	〃	Andw Anderson	〃	〃
	〃	〃	Abm Squibb	〃	〃
	〃	〃	Richd Williams	〃	〃
65	〃	〃	Thos Lee	〃	〃
	〃	〃	Daniel Miller	〃	〃
	〃	〃	Josh Raymond	〃	〃
68	〃	〃	Josh Dunson	〃	〃
	〃	〃	John Hunt	〃	〃
70	〃	〃	Willm Moss	〃	〃
	〃	〃	John Gardner	〃	〃
	〃	〃	Swan Easland	〃	〃
	〃	〃	John Appleton	〃	〃
	〃	〃	Thos Jones	〃	〃
75	〃	〃	William Lowry	〃	〃
	〃	〃	James Williamson	〃	〃
	〃	〃	Elias Beall	〃	〃

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Current Number.	Name of Prize.	Whether Man of War, Privateer, or Merchant-Vessel	Prisoners' Names.	Quality.	Time When discharged	Whither, and by what Order[2]
					1812	
	Nautilus	Man of War	Richd. Moss	Seaman	3 Septr	
	"	"	Geoe Hadley	"	"	
80	"	"	John Hughes	"	"	
	"	"	Thos Smith	"	"	
	"	"	John Smith	"	"	
	"	"	Willm Delloway	"	"	
	"	"	Jno Greenleaf	"	"	
85	"	"	John Ross	"	"	
	"	"	Davd Bathy	"	"	
	"	"	John Bissat	"	"	
	"	"	Bretan Stocum	"	"	
	"	"	Saml Johnson	"	"	
90	HBMS *Shannon*	being an American	Thos Barge	"	"	
	" *Africa*	ditto	James W. Doty	"	"	
	" "	ditto	Nichs Caston	"	"	
93	HBMS *Maidstone*	being an American	Jacob Thompson	"	"	
	" *Paz*	ditto	Dominic Naylor	"	"	
95	" "	ditto	Abm Springstone	"	"	

	〃	〃	ditto	Clk Warren	〃	〃	
	〃	*Emolous*	ditto	Peter Williams	〃	〃	
	〃	〃	ditto	Willm King	〃	〃	
	〃	*Acasta*	ditto	Robt H. Read	〃	〃	
100	〃	〃	ditto	Temple Hight	joined previous to sailing		
	〃	〃	ditto	Thos Ray	〃	〃	
	〃	〃	ditto	Peter Ribble	joined previous to sailing		
	〃	〃	ditto	Cornelius Rose	〃	〃	
	〃	*Morgiana*	ditto	Robert Swan	〃	〃	
105	〃	〃	ditto	John Karwin	〃	〃	
	〃	*Nymphe*	ditto	Saml. Blanchard	〃	〃	
	〃	〃	ditto	John Banks	〃	〃	
	USS *Essex* Prize *Nancy* recaptured		〃	Joseph S. Biggs Fras B. Gamble	Mid ditto	〃 〃	
110		〃	〃	Enoch M. Miley	Seaman	〃	
		〃	〃	John Francis	〃	〃	
		〃	〃	Olof Hasselfelt	〃	〃	
		〃	〃	Edwd Highly	〃	〃	
		〃	〃	Chas Foster	〃	〃	
115		*Bolina*	Mercht Vessel	John Fairfield	Master	〃	In *Dart* Cartel to Boston for Exchange
116		〃	〃	Geoe Dean	Super Cargo	〃	

NEWARK PUBLIC LIBRARY

Current Number.	Name of Prize.	Whether Man of War, Privateer, or Merchant-Vessel	Prisoners' Names.	Quality.	Time When discharged	Whither, and by what Order[2]
					1812	
	Bolina	Mercht Vessel	Fredk Williams	Boy	3 Septr	*Dart* Cartel to Boston for Exchange
	Hare	"	Chas Bertody	Master	"	
	"	"	John Wales	Mate	"	
120	"	"	John Hill	Boy	"	
	Monk	"	John P. Felt	Master	"	
	Bunkers Hill	Privateer	Jacob Lewis	Captn	"	
	Adelaide	Mercht Vessel	Benjn. Kimball	Seaman	"	
	recaptured from *Constitution*					
	United States Frigate		Thos Williamson	"	"	
125	"	"	John Connelly	"	"	
	"	"	John Smith	"	"	
	"	"	Jhalu Norris	"	"	
	"	"	John Pershow	"	"	
	"	"	Thos Point	"	"	
130	*Betsey*	Mercht Vessel	Thos W. Magruder	Mid	"	
	recaptured from *Argus*					
	United States Brig of War		John Roschelle	Seaman	"	
		"	John Simpson	"	"	

	〃	〃	Willm Foothacre	〃	〃	
	〃	〃	Willm Hopkins	〃	〃	
135	*Passinger*	Mercht Vessel	Saml Foote	Master		(*Dart* cartel to Boston for Exchange)

In all One hundred and thirty seven[3] Persons

HMB *Acasta*
being an American } Geo B. Champion
Bunkershill } Aira Freeman
〃 Two men left Brig

W Miller

The whole of the beforementioned Persons Victualled on the day Discharged, and also supplied with twenty Days Provisions for their passage

H Sawyer Vice Adml W Miller Agent for Prisoners of War

DS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 43. These prisoners' names are entered on a printed form. Handwritten additions to the heading are set in small capitals.

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[1] Column two, "Number on the General Entry Book," contained no entries and has been deleted.

[2] The entry for the final column on each page of this list reads: "*Dart* Cartel to the Port of Boston, per Order of Vice Admiral Sawyer, in exchange for the British Soldiers &c captured in the *Samuel and Sarah* Transport, by the United States Frigate *Essex*, who were sent to Quebec on Parole." On each page, a large brace, enclosing all the prisoners' names except those denoted "In *Dart* Cartel for Boston," points to this entry.

[3] "Seven" is written below "five," which is scored through.

[Enclosure]

[Royal Arms]

WHEREAS LIEUTENANT WILLIAM MILLER Agent to the Commissioners for conducting His Britannic Majesty's Transport Service, and for the Care and Custody of Prisoners of War at HALIFAX NOVA SCOTIA has granted US the undersigned PrisonerS described on the Back hereof, Permission to return to THE PORT OF BOSTON upon Condition that WE give OUR Parole of Honour, that WE will not enter into any Naval, Military, or other Service whatever, against the United Kingdom of GREAT BRITAIN and IRELAND, or any of the Dominions thereunto belonging, or against any Powers in Alliance with GREAT BRITAIN, until WE shall have been regularly exchanged for one or more British Prisoners of equivalent Rank, and that WE will surrender OURSELVES at such Place, and at such Time, as shall be required by the said Commissioners, or their Agent for the Time being, to whom WE ARE to give Notice from Time to Time of OUR Place of Residence. NOW, in Consideration of OUR Enlargement, WE do hereby declare, that WE have given OUR Parole of Honour accordingly, and that WE will keep it inviolably. Given under OUR Hands, at HALIFAX NOVA SCOTIA this Day of SEPTEMBER 1812.

Signature	Rank	Ship or Corps	Man of War, Privateer, or Merchant-Vessel
John Fairfield	Master	*Bolina*	Merchant Vessel
Geo Dean Jr	Super Cargo	ditto	ditto
Chas. Bertody	Master	*Hare*	ditto
John Wales	Mate	ditto	ditto
Jonathan P. Felt	Master	*Monk*	ditto
J. Lewis	Captain	*Bunker Hill*	Privateer
Saml. E. Foote	Master	*Passinger*	Merchant Vessel

DS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 43. These prisoners' names are signed to a printed form. Handwritten additions to the oath are set in small capitals.

Name	Rank	Age	Stature		Person	Visage	Complexion	Hair	Eyes	Marks or Wounds &c
			Feet	Inches						
John Fairfield	Master	39	5	7 1/2	Stout	full	fair	dark	hazle	None
Geoe Dean	Super Cargo	21	5	7 1/2	Slender	long	sallow	dark	hazle	None
Chas Bertody	Master	24	5	7	Stout	round & full	dark	dark	dark	None
John Wales	Mate	28	5	8 1/2	Stout	round	dark	dark	dark	Scar on Forehead
John P. Felt	Master	27	5	8	Stout	full	dark	dark	black	None
Jacob Lewis	Captain	48	5	6	Stoutish	full	dark	dark	hazle	None
Saml E. Foote	Mate	24	5	8	Stout	long	dark	dark	hazle	None

DS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 43.

The Uses of H.M. Sloop *Alert*

On 13 August 1812, Captain David Porter's Essex *captured the British sloop of war* Alert *(see pp. 218–19) and sent her into New York as a prize. After completing his cruise, Porter returned to the United States and informed the secretary of the navy of his arrival (see pp. 461–64). In responding to this welcome news, Secretary Hamilton sent congratulations and stated that President Madison would soon decide whether or not to take* Alert *into the navy. Hamilton asked Porter whether by making alterations,* Alert *could be converted into a useful cruiser.*[1] *In the following letter, Porter responds to Hamilton's question, supplying a good description of* Alert's *qualities.*

[1] *Hamilton to Porter, 12 Sept. 1812, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 10, p. 150.*

Captain David Porter to Secretary of the Navy Hamilton

U.S. Frigate *Essex*
Chester [Pa.] 15th Sept 1812

Sir,

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 12th inst. and immediately commenced the repairs. I shall cause my Sails, Bowsprit and other repairs to be made in Philadelphia and shall keep the ship in a state to act on the shortest notice until they are ready to come on board. Our provisions, wood and water will be completed tomorrow.

Your instructions respecting the Arms &c shall be attended to as soon as I can procure suitable persons to value them.

As respects the *Alert* I do not think she would suit our service as she does not sail well, and it would be mortifying to see the British Flag again flying on board her. She is a substantial well built ship and well equipped and calculated to mount 20 Guns has chiefly been employed in convoying. she carries without any inconvenience eight months provisions & water for crew of 120 men, she is high out of the water as you may suppose when she has eight feet hight on the Birth Deck, perhaps settling her Gundeck might improve her sailing, but I should not suppose it worth while to try the experiment when we have so many vessels in the United States so far superior to her in fleetness. As a Guard or prison ship, no vessel can be better calculated. As a Block Ship, six or eight 24 pounders could be mounted on the Birth Deck, which with twenty 24 pound Carronades & two long twelves on the Gun Deck would make her very formidable in the narrows near New York. As a Guard or prison ship no alteration would be required, for the latter the height between decks would be a great advantage. she is nearly as high out of the water as the *Essex* and I am informed by her officers that some others of the same class have heavy Guns mounted on the Birth deck. I have the honor [&c.]

D Porter

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 50.

A License to Trade with the Enemy

Vice Admiral Herbert Sawyer's secret memorandum of 27 July named explicit conditions under which American ships would be allowed to pass unmolested through a British blockade. In that document, he refers to a letter written to Andrew Allen, British consul in Boston, stating that vessels with a copy of that letter, certified by a consular seal, among their papers will be "protected" by the warships under Sawyer's command. The following documents include that letter, with seal, made out in favor of the schooner Mary *under the command of Russell Stephens. This practice, however, did not always result in the protection of the American vessels possessing the license. There were restrictions and risks for masters of vessels who chose to apply for this form of security.*[1] *After delivering their goods to Spain, Portugal, or the colonies of those nations, the ships had to return to the United States in ballast. From time to time unscrupulous British captains did extort money from the American masters they were supposed to protect. Likewise, if the licensed vessel were brought to by an American naval vessel or privateer, she might be taken as a prize of war.*

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[1] *See Samuel Eliot Morison,* The Maritime History of Massachusetts, 1783-1860 *(Boston & New York, 1921), pp. 205-206; John P. Cranwell and William B. Crane,* Men of Marque: A

History of Private Armed Vessels out of Baltimore During the War of 1812 *(New York, 1940), pp. 32–33; Garitee,* The Republic's Private Navy, *pp. 50–53; and William A. Fairburn,* Merchant Sail *(Center Lovell, Maine, 1945–1955), II: 837–45.*

Vice Admiral Herbert Sawyer, R.N., to Andrew Allen, British Consul at Boston

His Majesty's Ship *Centurion* at
Halifax the 5th of Augt 1812

Sir

Papers for the Schooner *Mary* 62 7/95 tons to be returned when this voyage is ended by the vessels return to the United States

I have fully Considered that part of your letter of the 18 ultimo, which relates to the means of ensuring a Constant Supply of Flour & other dry Provisions to Spain & Portugal & to the West Indies, & being aware of the importance of the Subject, Concur in the proposition you Have made. I Shall therefore give directions to the Commanders of his Majesty's Squadron under my Command, not to molest American Vessels Unarmed & So Laden "bona fide" bound to Portuguese or Spanish Ports, Whose Papers Shall be Accompanied with a Certified Copy of this letter Under Your Consular Seal, I have the honor to be Sir [&c.]

Sign'd H. Sawyer
Vice Admiral

Arms

Office of his Britannick
Majesty's Consul,

I Andrew Allen junior, His Brittanick Majesty's Consul, for the States of Massachusetts, New Hampshire Rhode Island and Connecticut, hereby certify that the Annexed paper is a true Copy of a letter Addressed to me by Herbert Sawyer Esquire Vice Admiral and Commander in Chief on the Halifax Station.[1]

Given Under my Hand and Seal of Office at Boston in the State of Massachusets this Sixteenth day of September in the Year of Our Lord One thousand eight hundred and Twelve.

And^{W} Allen, Jr.

Seal
wax

To all Officers of his Majesty's Ships of War
or of Privateers belonging to Subjects of his Majesty

Whereas from a Consideration of the Vital importance of Continuing a full and regular Supply of Flour & other dry Provisions to the Ports of Spain & Portugal & their Colonies, it has been deemed Expedient by his Majesty's Government, that notwithstanding the Hostilities now Existing between his Majesty's Government & these United States, every degree of Protection & Encouragement Should be given to American Vessels Laden with Flour & other dry Provisions & bound to Spain & Portugal or their Colonies—& Whereas in furtherance of these Views of his Majesty's Government, Herbert Sawyer, Vice Admiral & Commander in Chief on the Halifax Station, has directed me a letter under date of the 5th Augt 1812 (a Copy of Which is herewith enclosed) Wherein I am instructed to furnish American Vessels, So laden & destined, a Copy of this letter Certified under my Consular Seal, Which documents are intended to Serve as a perfect Safeguard & Protection, to Such Vessels in the prosecution of her Voyage.

Now therefore in prosecution of these instructions, I have granted to the American Schooner Called the *Mary* of 62 7/95 tons burthen whereof Russell Stephens is master, now laying in the Port of Alexandria and laden with Flour & Bread &c bound "bona fide" to the Port of St Bartholemews a Copy of the Said letter of Vice Admiral Sawyer, Certified under my Consular Seal, Hereby requesting all officers of his Majesty's Ships of War, or of private armed Vessels, belonging to Subjects of his Majesty, not only to offer no molestation to the Said Vessel, but on the Contrary to grant her all Proper Assistance and protection in her passage to St Bartholemews and on her return from thence to her origional Port of departure Whether laden with Salt or in ballast only.

Given Under my hand & Seal of
Office this Sixteenth day of Septr
in the Year of our Lord one thousand Eight Hundred & twelve.

And^{W} Allen Jr
his Majesty's Consul

Seal

Copy, DNA, RG45, AF 7.

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1. See UkLPR, Adm. 1/502, part 3, p. 419.

Intelligence on British Strength at Halifax

In responding to Secretary Hamilton's cruising instructions, Commodore Rodgers indicated his plans for leaving Boston and included valuable up-to-date information on the buildup of British warships at Halifax, Nova Scotia, and St. John's, Newfoundland. Although Rodgers' source was a Halifax newspaper, in all likelihood it was the most accurate information Washington had received in some time concerning the naval strength of the enemy.

COMMODORE JOHN RODGERS TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

U.S. Frigate *President*
Boston Sept 17th 1812

Sir

Your letter of the 9th inst I have received.[1]

The *President* will be ready for sea in 5 or 6 days, and in the event of a single British Frigate appearing off here I shall put to sea by that time, otherwise I shall wait for the *Congress*, which will be ready to accompany me in 12 or 14 days from this date. The *Wasp* (the 3rd and only remaining vessel of my division) has, I am just informed, arrived at Norfolk. I shall inform her commander of the desposition you have made of the Public Vessels, and direct him to join me in a certain Latd & Longd on a certain day, leaving him sufficient time for the outfit of his vessel

I have just seen a Halifax paper of the 4th Inst stating that Adml Sir John Borlaise Warren had been appointed by the British Admiralty to supercede Admiral Sawyer on the Halifax Station, and that he was on the eve of sailing from Portsmouth (Engd) with an additional squadron, to those already at Halifax & St Johns, consisting of five Ships of the line and two or three Frigates, one of which (the *Junon* rated a 38) the same paper states to have already arrived at Halifax

They are determined, it appears, to have Ships enough on our Coast: comparitively small as our force may be. I hope that we shall still be able however, by judicious management, to annoy them: and indeed if we had half their their number, of equal force, I am satisfied they would soon be made heartily sick of our Coast: At any rate, should they send their whole Navy on our Coast, I hope it never will be urged as a reason for the few vessels we have not going to Sea.

Your Copy of extracts from Lieut [William M.] Crane's letter of the 18th ult I have received, and presume the reinforcement under the command of Adml Warren as stated in the Halifax papers of the 4th Inst, is that to which he alluded

I received information to day that there were four British Frigates seen off New Port, the evening before last, and it is reported here (but from what Authority I could not learn) that there were three others outside of Block Island: everything that is seen on our coast now having three Masts, is magnified into a frigate.

Annexed is a list of the English Naval force at present on the St John's & Halifax stations I have the honor to be [&c.]

Jn^{o} Rodgers

List of British vessels of War at present on the Halifax & St John's stations the 25th August 1812

Name & rate		
Africa	64	G.S.
Centurion	50	
Shannon	38	
Spartan	38	
Nymph	38	
Statira	38	
Acasta	40	
Belvidera	36	
Maidstone	36	
Aeolus	32	

Tartarus	20	Ships
Indian	28	
Morgianna	18	
Colibri	18	Brigs
Plumper	14	
Emelous[2]	12	
Bream	6	Schooners
Juniper	8	

& 3 or 4 small Schooners

This force is under the command of Vice Admiral Sawyer
At St Johns under the command of Admiral Sir John T. Duckworth

Antelope	50	flag Ship
Pomone	38	
Jason	32	
Recruit	18	

Also 1 Frigate & four other Sloops of War *Ringdove*, *Rosamond*, & *Laura*, Brigs, have sailed with Convoys.

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 53.

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1. See pp. 471-72.
2. Formerly U.S. brig *Nautilus* which was renamed for the British sloop *Emulous* which grounded on Cape Sable on 2 Aug. 1812.

News for the British Admiralty

Vice Admiral Herbert Sawyer, nearing the end of his term as commander in chief on the North American station, continued to inform his superiors periodically of the movements of various warships, communications with the United States government, and news of the enemy's ships. In the following letter, Sawyer remarked particularly on the "unpleasant" news of Commodore Rodgers' squadron's safe return to Boston, arrangements made for the exchange of prisoners, and the problem of British seamen serving in American warships.

VICE ADMIRAL HERBERT SAWYER, R.N., TO SECRETARY OF THE ADMIRALTY JOHN W. CROKER

His Majesty's Ship *Africa* at Halifax
17 September 1812

Sir

I had the honor of addressing you on the 9th Inst and have to acquaint you for the information of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty with the movements of His Majesty's Squadron under my Command since that period and of the circumstances relative to the services that have occurred.

On the Evening of the 12th the *Hope* Tender arrived from Boston which she left on the 8th with Dispatches from Mr [Anthony St. John] Baker for Lord Viscount Castlereagh & myself, the former will be forwarded by this conveyance. She arrived at Boston with the Dispatches that were brought from England, in His Majesty's Ship *Nymphe* for Mr [Augustus J.] Foster on the 24th of August, and waited the return of the Messenger from Washington. I am quite ignorant of the nature of the dispatches she has brought in reply. I have received the unpleasant information by the *Hope* of the arrival of the American Squadron consisting of the *United States*, *President* and *Congress* frigates and the *Wasp* and *Hornet* sloops at Boston on the 31st of August after a very unsuccessful cruize-having taken and destroyed seven vessels of little value & many of their crews having died of the Scurvy. The *Constitution* arrived the following day in consequence of her action with the *Guerriere*, the *Chesapeake* is also in that port, nearly repaired & will be ready to sail in about a Month.

A Prize to the *Maidstone* and *Eolus* arrived here the 14th. She left them on the 2d off Long Island, on her way hither, say off Nantucket, the 5th Inst She fell in with the *Nymphe*, *Acasta Statira* & *Emulous*, steering for New York where I have reason to believe the *Shannon* & *Belvidera* to be:-The *Tartarus* arrived on the 14th from Quebec, with Convoy & brought here Capt [F. L.] Coore, Aide de Camp to His Excellency Sir George Prevost on his way to England with the American Colors taken with General [William] Hulls Army, the *Holly* arrived also on the 14th from New York with Dispatches for me from the Admiralty & on his way to Newfoundland, on the 15th the *Coquette* arrived from England & the *Paz* from Sidney with Convoy. I have deemed it expedient to send the *Coquette* to England with the Dispatches from Mr Baker & Sir George Prevost, which I hope will be approved of. I stated in my Letter No 70 of the 9th Inst. a general Exchange of Prisoners between this Country & the U.States has been agreed on, & an agent appointed by the American Government to Superintend those at Halifax, but I wish it to be understood by their Lordships, that I have no intention of exchanging those taken in Privateers, while there are any others, but shall wait their Lordships direction herein. I have therefore only to represent that when this Garrison is strengthened the great accumulation of Prisoners of whom there is a thousand, and at present would render it very difficult to obtain supplies equal to such an increase of Persons.

As I addressed you so recently & not any movements of the Squadron have taken place since, except those detailed above-I shall defer sending returns until the next opportunity. The ships remaining here are the *Africa*, *Centurion*, *Junon*, *Tartarus*, *Paz*, and *Bream*.

The *Endeavor* Cartel arrived here last night with Lieut. [Bartholomew] Kent and a part of the Crew of His Majesty's late ship *Guerriere*, & a number of Merchant Seamen. That Officer has informed me that on passing the *President*, Commodore Rodgers caused twelve of the *Guerrieres*, men to be taken out of the Cartel, who assigned as a reason for so doing, the circumstance of six men belonging to the late United States Brig *Nautilus* having been sent to England, and said they would be treated as Prisoners of War until the six men were released or satisfactorily accounted for. They were sent in the *Thetis* by Captain [Philip] Broke of the *Shannon* who addressed you on the subject. Six men who were serving on board the *Congress* frigate, having given themselves up as British Subjects have been sent here, but I am sorry this is not generally the case nearly two thirds of the American Frigates crews are English and manifest a disposition to quit them, but means are resorted to, to prevent it. I intend however to promulgate an offer to intervene for them, with a view of obtaining His Royal Highness the Prince Regents Pardon for all those who may be thereby induced to return to their allegiance, which I hope will meet their Lordships approbation. I have the honor to be &c

(Signed) H Sawyer
Vice Admiral

Jno Croker Esqr

Copy, UkLPR, Adm. 1/502, part 3, pp. 581-86.

A British Protest

Even as preparations were being made for the proper exchange of prisoners captured at sea, difficulties arose over the treatment of prisoners of war. Lieutenant William Crane had pointed out abuses of his men at Halifax, and in Boston, Andrew Allen, the former British consul, charged that Americans were interfering with British prisoners of war. In the following letter, Anthony St. John Baker complains to Secretary of State Monroe on these matters, asking redress.

ANTHONY ST. JOHN BAKER TO
SECRETARY OF STATE JAMES MONROE

Philadelphia Sept 19 1812

Sir,

By a letter dated on the 10th Inst which I have received from Mr Allen, his Majesty's late Consul at Boston and who now superintends the embarkation of the British prisoners of war from that port, I am informed that on the arrival at Boston of the Squadron under the command of Commodore Rodgers "every attempt was made to seduce the common Seamen amongst the prisoners who were on board to enter into the American service, but except in a few instances ineffectually; that several boys, however, from 10 to 15 years of age, who were apprentices under indentures, were compelled or persuaded to enter, and notwithstanding repeated applications for their release were still detained; and that many of the Seamen after being kept for some days on board were turned into the Streets instead of being given up to the Marshal, in the hope that from the want of means of procuring subsistence they would be compelled to resort to the American service for support."

I forbear making any remark upon these circumstances as I trust that a knowledge of this improper conduct on the part of its officers will alone be necessary to induce the American Government to issue such orders as may cause immediate redress to be afforded and may prevent the occurrence of such events in future.

I feel it however to be my duty more particularly to call your attention to the following circumstance as stated in the above-mentioned letter from Mr Allen. "The British Government Brig *Endeavour* with 110 passengers was stopped on her passage down the harbour by a boat from the *President*, Commodore Rodgers, and 12 men, part of the crew of the late *Guerriere*, every one of whom were Englishmen, taken forcibly out and carried on board of the man of war.[1] The pretext assigned for this outrage is that six of the Crew of the American Brig of war *Nautilus* (who were however British Subjects) were permitted to enter into the service at Halifax, and six more of the same Crew who were recognized as deserters from British Ships of war have been sent to England by the Admiral to await their trial."

I need not point out to you, Sir, the evil consequences to which a proceeding of this nature may lead, and which I am convinced will be deprecated by no person more than by yourself. With a view therefore to arrest in this early stage a course of measures which may have so fatal a tendency, I have the honour to request that the persons who were seized by the order of Commodore Rodgers may be released, and to offer to afford every facility in my power in transmitting either to Vice Admiral Sawyer or to his Majesty's Government any claim which may be made by the Government of the United States to the Seamen either at Halifax or in England whose detention has served as a pretext for the violent proceeding adopted by Commodore Rodgers. I have the honour to be [&c.]

Anthony St Jno Baker

The Honble James Monroe
&c &c &c

Copy, DNA, RG45, AF 7.

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[1] For Commodore Rodgers's comments on this incident, see pp. 477–78.

Prize Money for the St. Marys Gunboats

After a ship was captured, the usual procedure was for the prize master to bring her into the nearest safe port. There a prize agent would present documents before an admiralty court to have the ship libelled and condemned as a lawfully taken prize of war. The ship was then sold at auction. In the case of prizes taken by the navy, 50 percent of the proceeds were retained for the federal treasury and the rest was presented to the ship or ships involved in the capture. This sum was then dispersed proportionally according to shares assigned to the commodore, if there was one, captains, officers, and enlisted men. In the following letter, a purser assigned to gunboats in East Florida discusses the result of such an admiralty proceeding.

PURSER GWINN HARRIS TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

St. Marys in Georgia
19th September 1812

Sir:

The British Schooner *Trimmer* taken by the Gun Boats on this Station on the 9th July last,[1] has been libelled and condemned in the Admiralty Court of this District: The Specie and nett sales of the articles onboard, amount to Five thousand Eight hundred and Sixteen Dollars and ninety one cents. I am appointed by the captors as prize agent to distribute the one half amongst the officers & Crew & all concerned in the capture: The other half, say Two thousand Nine hundred and Eight Dollars and forty five & 1/2 cents remains in my hands Subject to the order of the Government. I have the honour to request You will direct, to whom the above Sum is to be paid. I have the Honour [&c.]

Gwinn Harris

ALS, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 58.

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[1] See Campbell to Hamilton, 18 July 1812, pp. 195-97.

Master Commandant Ludlow at New York Navy Yard

The departure of Captain Isaac Chauncey from New York for Sackets Harbor, with men and materiel from the yard, created a scarcity of many items. The task of filling these needs fell to Master Commandant Charles Ludlow. In the following letter, Ludlow states his situation and discusses the ship John Adams *and the prize ship* Alert *which Captain Porter had sent in during his cruise off the Grand Banks.*

Master Commandant Charles Ludlow to Secretary of the Navy Hamilton

U S Navy Yard New York
Septembr 29th 1812

Sir

Commodore Chauncey left this station for the Northd on Saturday the 26th Inst. since which, I have had the honor to Command the Yard and flotilla.[1] I beg leave to report to the Department the immediate want of Cannon Shot & Small Arms, (to supply the deficiency that Commodore Chauncey has made, by taking those articles from this station) I require 1300 round 32 pd Shot, and 800 Muskets, before the Gun Boats can be ready for service, and have only Men enough belonging to the flotilla & Yard to Man six Boats. I am making every exertion to Ship Men, & have made requisitions for the Shot and Arms, but have to report that neither can be compleated for some considerable time, the Muskets particularly. I have been inform'd that the Arsnel in Connecticut contain a Quantity of Muskets belonging to the United States, if we could have a supply of them, it would enable me to expedite the fitment of the flotilla, & put it in some state of defence.

The U S Ship *John Adams* has at present 30 men attached to her, without her having a Gun, or grain of powder on board.[2] these men I have no control over, owing to her being commanded by a Senior Officer to myself, if it could be so arranged, they would be of infinate service to the Yard & Boats at present.

I find the Ship *Alert*, prise to the Frigate *Essex* laying at the Yard.[3] I have receiv'd no orders respecting her, but if it should meet the approbation of the department, should like to make use of her as a receiving Vessel, it would tend very much to the cumfort & health of the recruits, for which purpose she is well calculated.

I hope to be honord with an answer respecting the Ship, Arms, &c. With the highest [&c.]

Ch^{s} Ludlow

ALS, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 75.

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1. On 9 Sept. 1812, Secretary Hamilton sent orders to Ludlow at Newburgh, New York, to report for duty at New York City to take command of the gunboat flotilla and, temporarily, the command of the navy yard. See Hamilton to Ludlow, 9 Sept. 1812, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 10, p. 147.
2. For further discussion about this ship, see pp. 187-88.
3. For Captain Porter's recommendation on *Alert*, see pp. 490-91.

The Naval Rendezvous

When a warship needed seamen, the traditional way of attracting them was to "open a rendezvous," which meant detailing an officer to go to a location where such men were likely to gather. There he would make a public announcement that his ship would soon sail on a cruise of a certain duration. Special provisions were usually made for an advance of several months pay and the payment of an enlistment bonus, called a "bounty." Occasionally, the officer would take "music" (a fifer and a drummer) with him, as well as a surgeon or surgeon's mate to examine the candidates. He might also have handbills printed or advertise in the newspapers. Those deciding to enlist would sign articles of agreement, pledging themselves to serve the required term in that ship.

In October 1812, the frigate Constellation *was in the final stages of a refit at Baltimore. The next document pertains to the navy's expectations for a two year cruise. It was* Constellation's *bad luck, however, to spend most of the war at Norfolk penned in by the British blockade of the Chesapeake.*

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON TO CAPTAIN JOHN CASSIN

Captain John Cassin
Gosport Navy Yard

Navy Depart
1st Octr 1812

The *Constellation* requires a number of able & Ordinary Seamen. Cause a Rendezvous to be opened at Norfolk for the purpose of entering for that frigate from 60 to 100 able Seamen and as many Ordinary Seamen–wages 12$ pr month for able & 8 to 10$ pr month for Ordinary Seamen–from two to four months advance may be made to each upon good Security to idemnify the public in the event of desertion–and should you find it absolutely necessary, you may allow to able Seamen a bounty of from 10 to 20$ each. The whole to be entered to serve two years from the ship's first weighing anchor on a cruize. The Agent will furnish the necessary monies upon the requisitions of the recruiting officer approved by you. The requisite blanks are herewith sent to you.

for Paul Hamilton
Ch: W: Goldsborough

Copy, DNA, RG45, CNA, Vol. 1, p. 339.

Some Naval Intelligence

While Essex *was lying at Chester, Pennsylvania, on the Delaware River, awaiting new sails and rigging, Captain Porter was eager for news of the position of the British fleet. He made a cruise a short distance down to the Delaware Capes, where he spoke an American merchantman. Porter learned that there was a large concentration of enemy ships to the north and passed that information to the secretary of the navy. The Delaware Capes were clear of blockading ships for the time being, a fact that must have made Porter anxious to get underway before they appeared. He finally sailed on 28 October, expecting to rendezvous with Commodore Bainbridge's squadron.*

CAPTAIN DAVID PORTER TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

U S Frigate *Essex*
Chester 2nd Octr 1812

Sir,

I have the honor to inform you that on the 27th ult: I got under way and proceeded down as far as the Capes, while there I obtaned the following information respecting the enemies force on the coast.

I spoke an American Schooner the Capt of which informed that he had been captured a few days since off the South shoal of Nantucket by a squadron of 7 British Frigates & a Brig, they kept possession of her 36 hours & then liberated her as she was of little value, they had several valuable prizes in company, the Squadron consisted of the *Acasta* 40, *Statira* 38, *Belvidere* 36, *Shannon* 38, *Maidstone* 36, *Aeolus* 32, little *Emulus* late *Nautilus*, & an other frigate.

The Officers of the Squadron informed the Capt of the Schooner, they were on the lookout for Commre Rodgers, who they understood was to sail from Boston on the 24th Sept and stated their intention to run into Boston Bay: From them he also learnt that the *Acasta* was one of the frigates which chaced the *Essex*, & was the nearest when they lost sight of us. On the 22nd ult the Schooner was spoke by the British Frigate *Orpheus* of 36 Guns, from the West Indies bound to Halifax, she put some prisoners on board and permitted her to proceed, the Capt informed that the ships would all be drawn from the West Indies for the Halifax Station; that he had spoke the *Southampton* a few days since bound to the West Indies with 3 prizes in company. The *Orpheus* wanted repairs & was going to Halifax to dock, her crew was represented as weak and very sickly: On Sunday last she spoke the ship *Bainbridge* from Liverpool bound to Phile, she had a convoy of 10 sail in company, from the West Indies bound to Halifax.

On Monday last the *Belvidere* & little *Emulus*, were seen off Barnagatt.

I have just arrived here and shall commence stripping the ship & making the necessary repairs immediately: The Bowsprit, Sails & rigging will soon I expect be ready to come on board, and I shall very shortly endeavour to have her in a state for service. I have the honor to be [&c.]

D Porter

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 93.

The Private Life of a Seaman

Few seamen wrote accounts of their life on the lower decks of American men-of-war during the War of 1812.[1] *They were mostly illiterate, and many were foreigners, a good number being naturalized Americans who had been born in the British Isles. When documents are located which shed light on any aspect of their lives, they deserve to be considered. The following document is a letter from the representative of a woman who claimed to be the wife of a blue jacket whom she had not seen for four years. The circumstances of her plight seem typical of the time. Hers was not a casual inquiry: she had paid visits to warships putting in at New York and had twice written to the highest military authorities (secretary of war and secretary of navy). No reply to her letters has been found.*

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[1] *There are at least two exceptional published accounts: Samuel Leech,* Thirty Years from Home or A Voice from the Main Deck *(Boston, 1843) and James Fenimore Cooper,* Ned Myers: or, A Life before the Mast *(Philadelphia, 1843). Leech's account is an autobiography, while* Ned Myers *was an account written by Cooper, as told to him by Ned Myers.*

HENRY HEDLEY TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

New York October 5th 1812

Hnlb Sir

Were it possible to obtain any information of the Seaman enlisted in the State service in our Navy I would not now trouble you. It is more than four years that a man by the name of Patrick McDonnough or McDonald (his Wife is not sure which it is) entered on board one of the frigates under the command of Commodore Decatur when he first enlisted he used to send his Wife Letters but it is more than nineteen months that she has not heard a word of him. A Sailor who said he was enlisted told Mrs. McDonnough that her husband died on board the *Constitution* and was burried in Washington on or before the twenty third day of April last past which rendered Mrs. McDonnough very uneasy and distressed in mind[1]-to know whether the assertion of the said Sailor was true or not I wrote to the Honorable Mr [William] Eustis the Secretary of War[2] some time in the beginning of last August (I think it was) but have not as yet had any answer which I expect is owing the business he has to attend to & perhaps that his Honor was not the person I should have addressed my Letter. If your Honor will please to send me an answer with all the possible information that is in Your Honors power to give about him and on board what Vessel he is so that when our fleet arrives in this Port his unhappy and disconsolate wife may go and see him Your Honor will confer a great favour both on his Wife and Your Honors Dutiful Servant

Henry Hedley

N B.

Please direct the Letter to me 190 Duane Street

Henry Hedley Builder

ALS, DNA, RG45, MLR, 1812, Vol. 6, No. 173.

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[1] Patrick "McDonough," ordinary seaman in *Constitution*, died 11 May 1812, while the ship was at Washington for heaving down. DNA, RG45, Muster Rolls and Pay Rolls, U.S.S. *Constitution*, Vol. 3, p. 20.

[2] See Hedley to Secretary of War Eustis, 14 Aug. 1812, DNA, RG45, MLR, 1812, Vol. 6, No. 26. The letters are similar though not identical in content. Mrs. McDonnough is quoted in the first as saying that her husband had served for three years as a marine and then two as a seaman under Commodore Decatur. She added that she had advertised in the newspapers and had visited the navy agent's office in New York to no avail.

Change of Command at Halifax

The Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty appointed Admiral Sir John Borlase Warren to replace Vice Admiral Herbert Sawyer during August 1812. Warren's burden was heavier than Sawyer's, as he was given control of the West Indies station, based on Bermuda, as well as *the North American station. Warren relieved Sawyer on 27 September and soon made an appraisal of his new command and reported his concerns to the Admiralty. In the following letter, addressed to the Secretary of the Admiralty, Warren expresses his concerns about the small number of ships at his disposal and the rapidly growing threats from American naval vessels and privateers.*

ADMIRAL SIR JOHN B. WARREN, R.N., TO SECRETARY OF THE ADMIRALTY JOHN W. CROKER

Halifax the 5th October 1812

Sir

Emulous lost
Laura captured
Juniper Brazils

Enclosed I beg to transmit a Copy of the Disposition of His Majesty's Squadron under the Command of Vice Admiral Sawyer as delivered to me by him on the 27th Ultimo.[1] The Ships named in the margin but upon that List are lost or gone from hence, and their Lordships will observe that the Force of this Station is in a very reduced state.

The demand of Ships for Convoys and the protection of the Commerce, the State of the War which seems to assume a new as well as more active and inveterate aspect than heretofore; the quantity of Shipping detained and now remaining without comdemnation in the several districts of the command, and the Enemy's Cruizers being very active and persevering which by the accompanying Copy of a Commission found on the Prize Master of a ship recaptured by the *San Domingo* will be seen already to amount to three hundred and eighteen, a number of large ships from 22 to 32 Guns being fitting out and in the different American Ports, exclusive of the United States Navy of Frigates, which also are to be encreased induce me to believe their Lordships will not disapprove of my requesting your stating for their consideration the necessity of re-inforcing the Squadron on this Coast, and in the West Indies, to enable me to meet the exertions of the Enemy, who seem to be determined to persevere in the annoyance and destruction of the Commerce of Great Britain and these Provinces. I have the honour to be, Sir [&c.]

John Borlase Warren

John Wilson Croker

P.S. The following Ships are off the List of this Squadron as enclosed in your letter to me dated the 8th August last.

Guerriere *Laura*	taken
Emulous *Chubb*	lost
Indian *Atalanta* *Coquette*	gone to England
Juniper	gone to the Brazils and East Indies
Leeward Island Squadron	
Barbadoes	lost

LS, UkLPR, Adm. 1/502, part 3, pp. 613-15.

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[1] Enclosure not found.

William Jones and Commodore Bainbridge

It is generally assumed that naval officers consulted among themselves as to the most favorable tactics and strategies to be used in war. It was natural that they would take advantage of each others' knowledge and experience. It has seldom been shown that they also consulted with civilians on such matters. In September 1812, Commodore Bainbridge received general cruising orders from the secretary of the navy, as did Commodores Rodgers and Decatur. But, on 5 October, Bainbridge wrote his friend William Jones, a Philadelphia merchant and former sea captain, asking his advice on where to cruise with Constitution, Essex, and Hornet. *Jones's informative reply was dated 11 October, so it probably reached Bainbridge before his squadron left Boston on 26 October. Bainbridge's track conformed well to the advice Jones provided, indicating at least that their thoughts coincided on the most fruitful way to annoy the enemy. In January 1813, William Jones* *became secretary of the navy, an appointment applauded by many naval officers, not the least of whom was Commodore Bainbridge.*

COMMODORE WILLIAM BAINBRIDGE TO WILLIAM JONES

U. S. Frigate *Constitution*
Boston 5 Octr 1812

My dear Sir,

Your friendly letter of the 30t ulti has this moment reached me. I trust ere this, that my letter to you, which was forwarded to New York has come to hand. But in case it should not, I beg leave to trouble you with a repetition of my request. Viz. When I had the pleasure of meeting you last in Philada you kindly offered to give me your ideas on a plan of Cruizing, Which I will now thank you for. And entertaining as I sincerely do, the very highest opinion of your able judgement, I must beg you will give me your opinion & advise, freely & fully. My command consist of the Frigates *Constitution* & *Essex* & Sloop of war *Hornet*. The two latter vessels are extremely well Commanded. We can carry between 4 & 5 months Provisions and 100 days water. The *Constitution* will be ready to leave this with the *Hornet* in twenty days. The *Essex* I shall order from the Delaware to meet me at afix place. Which would be the best Place, off Maderia, or the Cape de Verd Islands? In your observations on my intended Cruize be pleased to mention the best places for receiving Supplies of Water & Provisions. I intend to keep my Cruizing Ground as secret as possible, in order that the Enemy may not disturb me by superior numbers. I trust I shall always be freely disposed to meet them, as you say, Ship for Ship & Man for Man—in which event, I pledge you my word, my esteemed friend, you shall have no cause to blush for my conduct. Comr Rodgers Squadron consist of the *President*, (one of the finest Ships in the World—I offered Rodgers $5000 to change Ship) *Congress* & *Wasp*. Comr Decatur's Squdron is the *U. States*, *Chesapeake* and *Argus*. Rodgers & Decatur, with their own Ships, the *Congress* & *Argus* will leave here tomorrow on a Cruize, but wither bound, I know not. The *Chesapeake* I presume will be manned in the course of a month when she will also leave here. Having had to give the *Constitution* all new lower Masts, and many other Spars, and an entire new Gang of Standing Rigging, besides patching

Captain William Bainbridge, U.S.N.

her Wooden Hull, keeps me very busily employed last Sunday, I took in the Main Mast and this day, Sunday I am taking in the Foremast. So you'll perceive, that I dare even break the Sabbath in this Religious Land.

I believe the Report which we had sometime since, that there were first rates in the Squadron of Sir J B Warren was incorrect, later information states that he has [only 2] Seventy fours & one of that class of vessels, I think it probable they would have to Cruize on our Coast, to over-match our large Frigates.

I do not believe the Enemy will make any attack on any Part of our Sea Coast, particularly the Eastern Section, until they find the war is settled to a probable period of duration. At present, I presume, they will so conduct themselves as not to give that initiation which unquestionably would produce a more union of sentiments in the Action of war. I will thank you to say to our mutual friend Mr. Chandr Price,[1] that I received his letter and would if it had been practicable have attended to his request with much pleasure for Young Hunter is a great favorite with me. Mrs. B. joins in great regard & best wishes to Mrs. Jones & yourself. An believe me Dr Sir, to be with Sentiments of warm friendship, yours

W^{m} Bainbridge

William Jones Esqr. Philada

ALS, PHi, Uselma Clark Smith Collection, Papers of William Jones, folder Oct.-Dec. 1812.

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[1] Chandler Price, of Philadelphia, was seeking a promotion and transfer to a frigate for his nephew, Midshipman William M. Hunter, sailing master in *Vixen*. Hunter was commissioned lieutenant on 25 May 1813, and at first assigned to the sloop of war *Frolic*, at Boston, but was reassigned to *Constitution* on 28 Sept. See Chandler Price to William Jones, 13 Jan. and 3 Mar. 1813, PHi, U. C. Smith Collection, Papers of William Jones, folder Jan.-June 1813.

WILLIAM JONES TO COMMODORE WILLIAM BAINBRIDGE

Philada 11th Octot 1812

Dear Sir

I proceed to comply with your request of my Ideas of a Cruise for the Squadron under your Command, which your own experience & intelligence renders almost superfluous. I perceive by the Stock of provisions you mention and the places you propose for the *Essex* to rendezvous that you probably contemplate the extention of your cruize to the Southern Hemisphere. The positions which I consider the best for intercepting the British trade I will mention in the order of distance from our own Coast. First off Cape Carnaveral in the coast of Florida in the outer verge of the Stream you intercept to a certainty everything from Jamaica through the Gulph and have the ports of Georgia and the Carolinas near you, which your prizes can reach in 3 or 4 days. 2d The Crooked Island passage to intercept the trade from the East end of Jamaica our privateers have fallen in with a great many fine ships through both passages which were too strong for them and go in small squads of 4 or 6 ships these would be fine game for you. 3d. From one to two degrees North of Corvo and Flora [Flores, Azores Islands] this is an excellent position The W I fleets and small squads in order to avoid the fogs and keep together pass to the Southward of the tail of the Bank and near these Islands and then steer a more Northerly course. Commodore Rodgers was too far North when on the Maredian of the Azores. 4th. From the last mentioned position range along the Coast of Portugal in the track of the convoys to a position by Britain & the Straits of Gibralter and thence pass to the Westward of Madeira Teneriffe and the Cape de Verds or from the Azores direct to the Cape de Verds if it is thought the eastern route does not promise Success or would be likely to expose your route to the enemy. I would pass just to the Westward of the Cape de Verds and cross the Equator in about 22° West where you may in all probability fall in with some of the extra India men out or home or some of the trade to or from the Cape of Good Hope Isle of France &c. Here you may also replenish your water from the rains, as I presume you would not wish to touch at Teneriffe or the Cape De Verds Isles for that purpose. The Next cruizing Ground and which I deem a very important one is the Coast of Brazil with which the British drive a valuable trade and the returns are very frequently in a very convenient Commodity Viz Gold in Bars and Coin and other compact valuables. 5th. If you go further South than this I would advise you to touch at Tristan Da Cuna where you can get refreshments and water, an American having a few years Since settled there and carried with him live stock for Breed and the soil and climate being favorable I presume they have greatly encreased. You will find there a good Bay and anchorage. Thence I would look off the Cape of Good Hope for the trade that may be passing and avoid giving alarm as much as possible. If you can learn of any valuable Vessels lying in Table Bay you may by running in under English Colours perhaps have a chance of Cutting them out. 6th A Brilliant Cruize ought no doubt be made in the Indian Seas, but for the distance and absolute deprivation of a Single friendly Port to refit in Case of Accidents to which you would be much exposed. Which the Men with the dread of disease seems to forbid so hazardous an enterprize. There are numerous places in which you could replenish your water, and the Country ships you would probably make prize of would furnish you with abundance of rice and some other articles of provision. You might also calculate upon getting a partial Supply of Cordage and other Naval Stores out of your prizes but upon mature reflection there appears to be too much of chance and responsibility to warrant the enterprize with so important a part of our Gallant little Navy.

With a view to furnish you with information relative to the trade & Navigation of the India & China Seas Straits &c and the Voyage thence I have deliverd to Mr [George] Harrisons Clerk to be forwarded to you the best practical work extant that I have met with viz "Elmores Indian Directory" and for the China Seas you ought to have Hosburgs Charts and Directions.[1] The Homeward Bound British India Men pass the Cape of Good Hope from the Middle of Jany to the ~~last~~ of ~~March~~ April-the China fleets about a month later-and pass the equator in about Longt 22° W about five weeks after they pass the Cape of Good Hope touching at St Helena on their way down. The Outward Fleets leave the Channel from the latter end of Jany to the beginning of April pass the Equator from 18° to 25° as the Winds admit and pass within 5 or 6° of Brazil some much nearer and sometimes touch at Rio Janeiro. As much time would be lost in your route from the Coast of Brazil to the Cape in which you would meet with Nothing; the only object (unless you mean to pass to the East of the Cape) being to get your casting, look into the Cape and return in the track of the India Men, passing near St Helena and touching at Ascencion where you will in all probability get an abundant Supply of turtle (but recollect the report of cannon will drive them off). You will determine whether it would not be better to limit your cruize to the Coast of Brazil touching at Rio for supplies where they may [be] deposited for you with the Consul by direction &c and if on that station your success should not equal your expectations you can soon return to the Northward ranging along the West India Islands and select your cruizing ground according to circumstances. In this course you will pass near the little Portuguese Island of Ferdinand Noronio [*Fernando de Noronha*] off the NE point of Brazil. It has a good Harbor on the NW side and has a Governor & small Garrison. The colony is said to be made up of male exiles and convicts, who for their sins are deprived of all Sexual Intercourse. If it were an Irish Colony I think the Governor would have trouble unless he had prepared his subjects for the privation. Here you will find wood water and refreshments particularly turtle. I have passed within a league of it on my return from China and as I approachd the Island found a WNW Current which continued for three days at the rate of 40 Miles in 24 hours*

Wm Jones

*In whatever situation you may be placed I am well assured that a high sense of National and Personal honor guided by vigilance skill and intrepidity will mark your conduct and that the fruits of your labours may may be a rich harvest of glory wealth and happiness is the Sincere wish of your respectful friend

W J

P.S. You propose the *Essex* to join you off Madeira or the Cape de Verds Isles and ask which I think best. If you adopt the Idea of a short cruize off Corvo & Flores had She not better join you there. If not, I do not think you have much to tempt you to stay long near Madeira where our own vessels will discover and expose your route & therefore she may join you off Teneriffe or the one of the Cape de Verds Isles with more convenience.

Copy, PHi, U.C. Smith Collection, Papers of William Jones, folder Oct.–Dec. 1812. In Jones's hand; endorsed at head: "Copy of my letter to Commodore William Bainbridge Esqr."

1. H. M. Elmore, *The British Mariner's Directory and Guide to the Trade and Navigation of the Indian and China Seas* (London, 1802); James Horsburgh, *Directions for Sailing To and From the East Indies, China, New Holland, Cape of Good Hope and the Interjacent Ports* (London, 1809–1811); and J. Hosburgh [James Horsburgh], [*Atlas of the East Indies and China Sea*, London, 1806–1821], to accompany the "India Directory."

The Promotion of Lieutenant Charles Morris

In reporting his successful engagement with Guerriere, *Captain Isaac Hull had high praise for Lieutenant Charles Morris' skills as* Constitution*'s first lieutenant. In a spontaneous act of gratitude, Secretary of the Navy Hamilton had Morris promoted directly to post captain. This generous act offended many officers both senior and junior to Morris. His peers and superiors generally conceded his competence, but they also considered him merely lucky to have been serving in* Constitution *at the time of her stunning victory. In their opinions, several others could have done as well, and a more reasonable reward would have been promotion to the next higher rank–that of master commandant.*

As a major incident in the internal administration of the Navy Department, the promotion controversy reveals the special sensitivity of naval officers in matters of honor and position. They did not hesitate to state their objections to the secretary. Three letters that follow are indicative of the mood of many. Master Commandant James Lawrence's reaction is noteworthy. Although well-liked and acclaimed as a leader of men, Lawrence carried the point of personal honor to an extreme. He declared he was so insulted that he was on the verge of resigning. The succeeding document is Lieutenant Morris's grateful acceptance of the promotion, taken against the advice of some of his friends. The last two documents are Secretary Hamilton's caustic rejection of Lawrence's threat to resign and Lawrence's shocked rejoinder wherein he announces his intention to appeal to the Senate, over the head of his operational commander.

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON TO LIEUTENANT CHARLES MORRIS

Nav: Dep'mt
5 Octo 1812

I have the happiness of transmitting to you herewith, by the special direction of the President of the United States, a Commission as captain in the Navy of the United States dated 19. Aug: 1812. a day which will ever be remembered with pride by every American for the brilliant achievement to which it gave birth, & in which you so honorably participated.

When your health will permit You will be pleased to proceed to this place and assume command of the frigate *Adams*.

P. Hamilton

Copy, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 10, p. 169.

COMMODORE WILLIAM BAINBRIDGE TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

U. S. Frigate *Constitution*
Boston 8th Octr 1812

Sir,

Agreably to my promise, I forward the enclosed,[1] with my opinion, that the observations contained in it, are such as evidently strikes me to be correct.

I trust that Leut Morris, for whom I have the most sincere regard, and for whose abilities as an Officer I entertain the highest opinion, will receive the promotion of Master Commandant, and an appointment to one of our fine Ships. But I do not think that he or any Leut ought to be promoted over all the Master Commandants, to Post Captain. We have some very valuable officers in the Class of Master Commandants. No man can excel Captain Laurence in the Character of a Brave and valuable Officer. He was first Leiut when he assisted in the *Intrepid* Ketch to burn the *Philad* for which he received no honors. His Commander was promoted, its true, to a Post Captain, but at that time, we had no master Commandants, consequently he went from one Step to another and did not take the leap of two Grades. I have the honor [&c.]

W^{m} Bainbridge

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 103.

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[1] Master Commandant Arthur Sinclair's letter to the secretary of 7 Oct. 1812, following.

Master Commandant Arthur Sinclair to Secretary of the Navy Hamilton

Argus at Sea, off Boston
October the 7th 1812

Sir

To you, as the guardian or our rights, I feal bound to appeal, whenever there is a probability of their being incroached on, and as it is easier to guard against an evil than to combat it after it takes place, I think it proper to offer you my sentiments on the following subject.

It having been suggested that the friends of Lieut Morris intended using their influence to have him promoted to the grade of a post Captain, in consequence of his officer like conduct in the late brilliant action fought by Capt Hull, I have maturely reflected upon the merits of such an act and cannot find that justice in it, which it might appear to carry with it to persons not immediately interested in its consequences. All of us who have now arrived to the grade of Master Commandant are of fourteen or fifteen years standing in service, and have gained that rank entirely by our long services, without any opportunity having offered by which fortune could aid us: and if we are to be over topt by every brave Lieut on whom fortune may smile, there will be no stimulus left us: for, Post Capt being the highest rank we can aspire to, however brilliantly we may distinguish ourselves, the Lieut who has been lucky enough to gain this rank at one promotion, will continue to Rank us, although his services may not have been half equal to ours. Were there other grades still higher by which we could derive similar advantages, our case would not then be peculiarly hard as it now is, or rather will be, in case this sytem is addopted. There are none of us who would, were it in our powers take one particle from the merits of Mr Morris, and I pledge my honor, as an officer, were I at the head of the list of Lieuts I should be pleased to see him made a Master Commandant over me, as much as I should to see any junior of my own grade advanced to a post rank above me, under similar circumstances. What would be said by all the old Captains, were it to please the government to say that one of us should take Rank of the whole of them? Wy, they would at once determine that their long services had been thrown away, and they would leave the service without hesitation. There is but one sentiment on this subject throughout the service, and that is, that Lieut Morris should be promoted to a Master Commandant, and as such he would be greeted, with pleasure by all grades. It is as much as he can expect from this single act, and I believe it to be as much as he wishes. I hope, Sir, you will at once see the weight of the arguments I have used, and the propriety of using them; and that my motives may be appreciated as they deserve and as they are intended; for the good of the service and in justice to the Rank I hold in that service. Let me hope that while I am absent in the service of my Country, that you sir, will be a stickler for my rights, and that this may be brought forward as my remonstrance against an attempt to infringe them in the present case. I have the honor [&c.]

A Sinclair

ALS, DNA, RG45, MC, 1812, Vol. 1, No. 104.

MASTER COMMANDANT JAMES LAWRENCE TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

U S Ship *Hornet*
Octr 10th 1812

Sir

I was much gratified this evening with a report of your return to Washington, and hasten to address you as the guardian of our rights, on a subject that nearly concerns me as well as others of my grade in the service. it has for some time past been currently reported in this city (and in fact I have seen two letters from Mr Gouldsborough that coroborates the report,) that Lieut: Morris was to be promoted to the rank of Captain in the Navy, in consequence of his conduct onboard the *Constitution* in the late action with the *Geurriere*. I have the most exalted opinion of Lieut: Morris, of course cannot wish to detract from his merits, but sir after the most mature consideration, I really cannot discover wherein his exertions as first Lieut: entitle him to the rank to which I understand he is about to be promoted. the appointment of a Master & Commander would in my opinion amply compensate him, and as far as I can judge give universal satisfaction, I have consulted with Commodore Rodgers, who fully agrees with me in opinion and has authorized me to make use of his name in my communications to you on the subject, Commodore Bainbridge's sentiments on the occasion I presume you are acquainted with as he informs me he has written you–I am fearful you will consider my remonstrance as improper, but trust on takeing my feelings into consideration, you will make every allowance when I inform you that my friends universally and the officers generally coincide with me in thinking, that the promotion of Lieut Morris to the grade I first mentioned, bears peculiarly hard on me, as I was first Lieut: with the now Commodore Decatur at the time he destroyed the Frigt *Philadelphia* at that time, if not now, thought as much of, as the capture of the *Geurriere*, for which exploit he was promoted to the rank of Post Captain, and I rewarded by the offer of two months pay. After devoting near fifteen years of the prime of my life, faithfully to the service of my country, you I trust will not think hard of my haveing remonstrated thus plainly to you, on the subject of Lt Morris's promotion over me, I assure you I should regret leaveing the service at any time, particularly at this period, but if out rank'd by any officer, who I think has not greater claims to promotion than myself, I have no alternative, trusting to the impartiality of your decision. I have the honor [&c.]

Ja^{s} Lawrence

ALS, DNA, RG45, MC, 1812, Vol. 1, No. 106.

LIEUTENANT CHARLES MORRIS TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

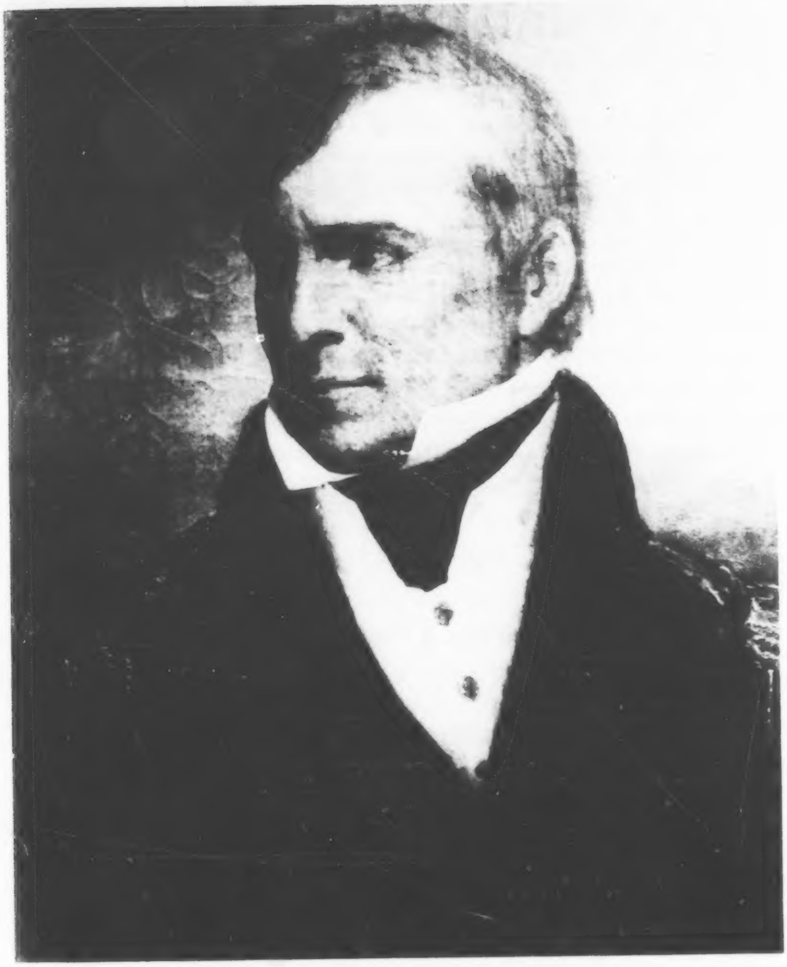
Boston
Octr 10th 1812

Sir

I have this day received your letter of the 5th inst covering my commission as a Captain in the Navy of the United States.[1]

I have to request that you will be pleased to present my grateful acknowledgements to his Excellency the President of the United States for this unexpected and signal mark of his confidence, and to assure him that my highest ambition will be to prove by my future conduct that it has not been misplaced.

Be pleased also to accept my sincere thanks for your interference in my favor on this occasion, and for the very honorable command you have been pleased to assign me.



Captain Charles Morris, U.S.N.

My health is not yet so far restored as to enable me to travel with safety, whenever it shall be I shall lose no time in repairing to Washington in conformity to your orders. With great respect [&c.]

C: Morris

ALS, DNA, RG45, MC, 1812, Vol. 1, No. 105.

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1. The Senate delayed confirmation of Morris's promotion until Mar. 1813, and in that month made some allowances for the seniority of Morris's colleagues. Three captains were confirmed by the Senate: Jacob Jones on the 3rd of Mar., James Lawrence on the 4th, and Charles Morris on the 5th. In this way, some of the jealousies caused by the Morris promotion were assuaged. See Charles Morris, *The Autobiography of Commodore Charles Morris* (Annapolis, Md., 1880), pp. 167-69.

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON TO MASTER COMMANDANT JAMES LAWRENCE

Nav Dep'mt
17. Octo 1812

Capt. Lawrence
U. S. Ship *Hornet*

Your letter of the 10th Inst has reached me. The Suggestion with which that letter concludes prevents an answer in detail, & confines me to the single observation, that if (without cause) You leave the service of our Country, there will still remain, Heros & patriots to support the honor of its flag.

P. Hamilton

Copy, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 10, p. 180.

MASTER COMMANDANT JAMES LAWRENCE TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

U.S. Ship *Hornet*
Boston Octr 22d [1812]

Sir

I had the honor of addressing you a few days past on a subject wherein I was deeply interested, (and this morning while under sailing orders) received your answer, I regret that you should have considered my letter as indecorous, indeed I am astonished it should so have been considered, as it only contained a very respectful representation of my feelings in a cause of complaint in which I was seriously affected, and to you sir as the head of our naval establishment, and the Guardian of our legal rights; I certainly thought that I could address my complaint without giveing offence, but your answer has taught me to know that I was mistaken and that an officer in the Navy cannot solicit the navy department for redress without having his patriotism call'd in question. In consequence of which I have consulted my friends, and have drawn up a memorial which will be presented to the Honble the Senate of the U States, and shall be governed by their decision, I really think my holding a commission as Master Commdt: a bar to promotion, inasmuch as I am constantly attached to a frigate, and should she be so fortunate as to capture a vessel of a equal force, her first Lieut:-agreeable to the present arrangement must be promoted over me. very respectfully I remain.[&c.]

Ja^{s} Lawrence

ALS, DNA, RG45, MC, 1812, Vol. 1, No. 109.

Labor and Management at the Washington Navy Yard

A number of blacksmiths employed at the Washington Navy Yard petitioned the secretary of the navy for redress of grievances relating to their wages, use of liquor, and physical punishment. The secretary forwarded this petition to Commodore Tingey for his reaction. What follows is Commodore Tingey's statement of policy on the questions raised by the petition.

COMMODORE THOMAS TINGEY TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Navy Yard Washtn
7th Octr 1812

Sir

I have maturely considered the Petition of the blacksmiths, which you did me the honor to refer to me, and which is herewith return'd.[1]

Their first charge, of being deprived of "refreshments" (liquor) while at heavy work, is not well founded. my orders were that, if such indulgence was necessary, they should bring it in with them, on the bell ringing to work, the objection was to the breaking off from work, several boys or men for half an hour at a time, in the course of the day, to bring the liquor from outside the Yard.

In respect to raising their wages to that of the Shipwrights, it behoves me to observe that, they certainly are, a valuable set of workmen. most of them of extraordinary ability and industry, but as far as my knowledge goes, I conceive there is no precedent, at any port in the Union, where smiths wages are equal to those of shipwrights: and again should we at this time make a rise of wages in any one class, I conceive that all the others will expect it, the same proportions being paid in the different branches from the first establishment of this yard.

Their third request being granted, would have strong tendency to destroy all organization & discipline in the Yard, my determination being long made known to discharge from this service, any of the men, who should strike another, within the yard. Understanding however that the Negro who was struck, had been extremely careless in his duty, & gave provocation thereby, I only observed to the man who struck him, that, on a repetition of such an act, I would certainly dismiss him. All of which is respectfully submitted. I have the honor [&c.]

Thos: Tingey

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 102.

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[1] Petition not found.

Commodore Bainbridge Orders a Rendezvous

By the middle of October, Commodore Bainbridge had determined his departure date from Boston and made his cruising plans. Constitution *and* Hornet *would sortie in company, but Captain Porter's* Essex *was still under repair in the Delaware. Bainbridge therefore sent Porter instructions on where he should attempt to rendezvous with the squadron. The following letters contain these instructions, which were included among documents sent to the Navy Department in 1813 when Bainbridge reported his victory over H.M. frigate* Java.

COMMODORE WILLIAM BAINBRIDGE TO CAPTAIN DAVID PORTER

(Copy)

U.S. Frigate *Constitution*
Boston 13th October 1812

Sir,

As soon as the Frigate *Essex* under your command is prepared for sea, you are hereby directed to proceed without delay to join me. Enclosed is a detail of my intended movements which you will please to receive as your guide for finding me. Very Respectfully [&c.]

(Signed) Wm Bainbridge

Captain David Porter
Commr U.S.F. *Essex*

Copy, DNA, RG45, CL, 1813, Vol. 1, No. 6 1/2.

[Enclosure]

U.S. Frigate *Constitution*
Boston 13th October 1812

Sir,

I shall sail from this Port by the 25th Inst, and shall shape my course in the most direct way for the Cape De Verd Islands where I shall stop at the Island St Yago in Port Praya Bay to fill up my water, and presume I shall leave there at furthest by the 27th November, and hope I shall meet you there. From Port Praya Bay, I shall proceed to the Island Fernando Noronha, in Late 3° 53′ South, and Longe 32° 27′ West, at which place I shall get Refreshments, and expect to leave there by the 15th December, and thence cruise along the Brazil Coast, as far South as Cape Frio in Late 23° South and Longe 41° West, until the 15th January, at which time I intend to pass by Janerio, and cruise between that place and the Island St Sebastian until the 1st February, when I shall stop at said Island (Sebastian) to receive some Refreshments, and shall Leave it on the 3d February and proceed to the Island St Catherine in Late 27° 32′ South & Longe 49° 15′ West, which place I shall Leave by the 15th February. I shall then proceed off the Island St Helena, and cruise to the Southward of it, occasionally so near as to discover it. In this station I intend to remain to intercept the returning Ships from India, until the 1st of April.

Should any unforeseen cause or accident prevent our meeting by the 1st April next, you must then act according to your best judgment for the good of the Service on which we are engaged. I herewith transmit you a copy of my instructions, in order that you may know the Latitude I am acting under, which I consider completely discretionary.

I shall be extremely anxious for us to meet, to communicate more fully, and for me to receive your able assistance in advice and cooperation. With best wishes for the health & Success of yourself, Officers & Crew, I am [&c.]

(Signed) Wm Bainbridge

Captain David Porter
Commander US, F. *Essex*

Copy, DNA, RG45, CL, 1813, Vol. 1, No. 6 1/2.

British Encouragement of Licensed Traders

On 9 October, Commodore Decatur's United States *left Boston to join* President, Congress, *and* Argus. *Three days later, as they were*

best copy available

cruising as a squadron, United States *chased and brought to an American merchant ship,* Mandarin. *Among the captain's papers was a package of licenses from England which were intended for shipowners who had applied to the British for permission to trade with Spain and Portugal. Decatur made a prize of the ship and sent the licenses to Secretary Hamilton. The following document was Decatur's letter of enclosure. The incident became an annoyance to Decatur (see pp. 637–38) after his return.*

COMMODORE STEPHEN DECATUR TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

U. States Ship *United States*
at Sea Latitude 41 Longitude 60
October 12 1812

Sir,

Having yesterday parted with the squadron under the command of Commodore Rogers in pursuit of a Frigate I this morning fell in with the American Ship *Mandarin* William Baker Master from London bound to Philadelphia-on examining her papers I discovered that a large portion of the Merchandize on board her was for British account and I have resolved to put an officer into her and sail her to Norfolk.

I also found a number of licenses from the British Government to Citizens of the United States granting them protection in the transportation of Grain &c to Spain & Portugal. These I have taken the liberty to forward herewith for your disposal. I am very respectfully [&c.]

Stephen Decatur

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 113.

Captain Porter Requests a Transfer

As much as David Porter's name is linked with the fortunes of the frigate Essex, *it is ironic that she was not his favorite ship. In the following letter, Porter continues to complain of* Essex's *sailing* *qualities, which had been the object of a refit at New York in June (see pp. 143–44). Porter also objects to commanding a ship armed only with carronades. These guns were devastating at short range, but without longer guns,* Essex *was vulnerable at ranges greater than 1,000 yards.* Essex's *last engagement, with H.M.S.* Phoebe *and H.M.S.* Cherub *in 1814, provided a tragic commentary on this fact.*

CAPTAIN DAVID PORTER TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

U S Frigate *Essex*
Chester [Pa.] 14th Octr 1812

Sir,

I had the honor to address you on the 6th & 15th ulto respecting the *Alert*. My Officers and men seem very anxious to know how that ship is to be disposed of and the views of the Department respecting her, particularly as they are now destined on a very long cruize and are desirous of having the means of providing themselvs with cloathing, Stores &c &c. They have repeatedly requested me to write to you on the subject in order that some arrangement may be made before their departure.

Permit me also to observe that I took the liberty to address a few lines to you on the 23d ulto[1] respecting a transfer to the *Adams* and I beg that the department will indulge me in the exchange on my return from the next cruize as my insuperable dislike to Carronades and the bad sailing of the *Essex*, render her in my opinion the worst frigate in the service. An Officer junior to myself has command of a 36 Gun Frigate and if I should not be so fortunate as to obtain the *Adams*, the probability is that an officer junior to myself will also be appointed to her, should there however be material obstacle to making this change, I endeavour to do my duty to the utmost in *Essex*, and trust to the fortune of war for a better ship. I have the honor [&c.]

D Porter

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 122.

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[1] See Porter to Hamilton, 23 Sept. 1812, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 68.

Guns for Privateers

As owners of privateers prepared ships for active service, they occasionally encountered difficulties in obtaining guns and other weapons of the desired size and type. Lewis Leroy, a merchant in Washington, North Carolina, was confronted by just such a problem. Hoping for government assistance, Leroy wrote the secretary of the navy describing his need for ordnance and enclosed a letter written on Leroy's behalf by Representative Blackledge, who was actively interested in naval matters (see pp. 452–54). The following documents include Leroy's letter and Blackledge's recommendation. The secretary's response to these supplications is unknown, but it is likely that he discussed the request with Leroy during a personal interview. The Navy Department generally encouraged the equipping of privateers,[1] so it is probable that Hamilton loaned Leroy the required weapons.

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[1] *See, for example, Benjamin Crowninshield to Secretary of War Eustis, 3 July 1812, DNA, RG45, MLR, 1812, Vol. 5, No. 12, in which he asks his Massachusetts ally to assist in the procurement of 14 nine-pounders for the privateer* America*; and the letter of Boston Navy Agent J. Vincent Browne to Secretary of the Navy David Henshaw, 16 Sept. 1843, referring to several cannon lying at Crowninshield Wharf in Salem, which were said to have been loaned by the navy for use on board* America*, DNA, RG45, MLR, 1812, Vol. 5, (no document number but located between nos. 22 & 23).*

CONGRESSMAN WILLIAM BLACKLEDGE TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Newburn October 11th 1812

Sir

Lewis Leroy Esquire Merchant of Washington North Carolina, is the only person I know of in this part of the Country who has had the spirit and enterprize to engage in fiting out a privateer. He has now a very fine new vessel built for the purpose of two hundred and forty two tons which he could and would have ready for sea in a month if he Could but procure the Cannon Small arms and Cutlasses. But as there are no manufactories of these articles in this State he has it not in his power to procure them here where he is known. His active Capital is and will be exhausted by the time he has got the vessel in all other respects fit for sea. On laying his circumstances before me I have thought not impossible, but he might on giving bond and good security (which he can give) to restore the arms if not taken by the enemy, obtain from your department one eighteen pounder and the necessary shot. 50 Cutlasses and 50 muskets, the muskets would do even if not in prime order nor of the best quality, he would also like to have if he could obtain it one 24 pound Caronade & two long sixes. From Mr Leroys judgment in vessels, as well as in Commerce, I have no doubt if he can get this vessel to sea properly equiped she will be as great a thorn in the enemies side as any afloat of her burthen. He will have her Copperd and in every respect well fited for a long Cruise, if he can but procure the Arms he wants. Believing as I do that till our navy is increased which will take some time, it is by privateering only that we shall be able much to annoy the enemy, & knowing your anxiety to make the enemy feel as much as possible on his element, I have ventured to address you this to be forwarded or handed you by Mr Leroy under a firm conviction that if it be within the Compass of your power & resources to aid him you will do so. And with sentiments of very great respect remain [&c.]

W^{m} Blackledge

P.S. Mr L. can contrive to get the arms without danger of Capture from any port upon the waters of the Chesapeake & will thank you if this is forwarded you by him to address an answer to him at Washington No Carolina.

ALS, DNA, RG45, MLR, 1812, Vol. 6, No. 193.

LEWIS LEROY TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Washington N Ca
14 October 1812

Sir,

Having Beeing Informed that the Government had in Some Instances extended their aids to Individuals towards arming against our Ennemies, has induced me to take the Liberty of asking wether I could also be aided with the necessary guns, and Small arms for a vessell of 240 tons which I have Built Since the Declaration of war, expressly for to Cruise as aforesaid; Having nearly Exhausted my funds in Building and fitting it will be allmost impossible to Procure the armament unless government will aid me, I was advised to apply to the war Department which I have done and made a demand for these very articles I now write for, but since I am informed that yours is the Proper one; have obtained a Letter from Wm Blackledge "Esquire" to you which I Respectfully Inclosed, with the request, if you have it in your Power to grant me the Loan of the arms I want, I will upon Knowing their Value, give my Bond with approved Sureties to the collector of this Port and authorise some Persons to receive them at the Place you'll be good enough to order; the arm's wanted are as upon otherside;

1	18. Pound. cannon; there is Several here Belonging to government one of these would awnser
2	6. Pounders. cannon
4	24 Pound Caronnades.
50	Musketts
50	Pairs Pistols
50	Sabres or cutlasses. of the Latter there is a Parcell here belonging to government.

The Musketts and Pistols if not even in the Best of order would never the Less awnsser. I Pray you to be good enough to Inform me where I can Send for the above articles, in case my Demand is granted. I am with sentiments [&c.]

Ls. Leroy

ALS, DNA, RG45, MLR, 1812, Vol. 6, No. 198.

Captain Isaac Hull Ordered to New York

Soon after returning to Boston following his defeat of Guerriere, *Captain Hull learned of the death of his brother and asked to be relieved of command of* Constitution.[1] *Secretary Hamilton complied with his request, ordered him to transfer his command to Captain Bainbridge,* *and informed Hull that his request for leave to clear up his brother's estate would be granted.*[2] *Bainbridge was to continue as commandant of Charlestown Navy Yard while preparing his ship for sea; when Hull returned from leave, he would relieve Bainbridge of his duties as yard commandant.*

Meanwhile, Captain Chauncey was making preparations to depart New York Navy Yard for his new command on Lakes Ontario and Erie, and Master Commandant Charles Ludlow had been ordered to relieve him, at least temporarily (see pp. 502–503). At some point, however, the secretary must have had second thoughts about Ludlow's appointment, for on 10 October he peremptorily ordered Hull, who was in New York on family business, to assume command of all warships and gunboats at New York, to ready them for the defense of the city, and to "follow the Instructions of gen Armstrong, with respect to your operations for the public good."[3]

The document which follows is Hull's reply to this sudden change of plans, revealing his willing, though perplexed, state of mind.

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1. Hull to Hamilton, 1 Sept. 1812, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 3.

2. Hamilton to Hull, 9 Sept. 1812, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 10, p. 145.

3. Hamilton to Hull, 10 Oct. 1812, DNA, RG45, AF 11.

CAPTAIN ISAAC HULL TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Newyork
15th October 1812

Sir

I have had the honour to receive your instructions of the 10th instand and shall proceed to Carry them into Execution as speedily as Possable. but it will Take a longtime to put the GunBoats and other vessels on this Station in a State for Service.

The *John Adams* is without Armament of any sort nor is there a gun in the Yard fit to Put onboard of her nor a gun Carriage had we the Guns. I shall however See what Can be done And in a day or Two make you acquainted with the State of the Yard and the different Vessels on this Station.

I regret to find in your Instructions I am directed to Call on General [John] Armstrong and receive his Instructions And Consult with him on the operations of Vessels Stationed here under my command. There Can be no question but he ought to be consulted on some points And

That the land and sea forces ought to act Together-but I cannot suppose that it is your intention That I receive orders from General Armstrong as to the disposition or Equipment of the force placed by you under my Command. I should be much pleased to be made acquainted with your intentions on that Subject as I yesterday Called on General Armstrong and requested of him to suspend any orders that he might find necessary to give untill I heard from you for untill that Time I could not Consent to act upon any order he might think proper To give. When you was pleased to order me to take charge of the yard at Boston I had hopes of geting a few Months leisure to attend to my Private Concerns, and Came here for that Purpose and having Commenced on the Settlement of my Brothers Estate I must Suffer great inconvenience by being continued at this Yard. I have to make arrangements for the Comfort of a large Famaly & Provide for them against the Winter. My young brothers depend on me to Settle my Brothers Estate and to Provide for them. I hope Therefore situated as I am if the Service will Possably admit of it you will be pleased to Consider me attached to the Boston Station or Should you have given that yard to some other officer you will give me a Station in Connecticut or if there is none Then grant me a furlough for a few months I could not ask it under any other Circumstances than these I have mentioned to you. The Season will now soon be such that the enemy will hardly attempt to enter our Ports so that there will be but little for the officers to do here. indeed when the Boats are fited out or even in fiting them out I should suppose that Captain Ludlow is fully Competent to everything they may require. I have the honor to be [&c.]

Isaac Hull

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 123.

Charleston Under Blockade

The impact of British ships actively blockading a poorly defended port can be seen in the following report from Charleston. The American navy's few ships were otherwise employed and unavailable to provide a counter-blockading force, hence, Captain John Dent's sug-

gestion of other alternatives. His proposal that a local vessel be bought by the state and loaned to the navy is reminiscent of improvised navies during the American Revolution. He provides evidence that in the absence of federal support local communities felt forced to take action to defend themselves.

CAPTAIN JOHN H. DENT TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Charleston. 17th October. 1812

Sir

My last acquainted you, that our port was blockaded by three Brigs of War. Since which they have been joined by a fourth, and from the look out last evening a large Ship was seen in the offing, Supposed to be a frigate, as, the Squadron did not chace; She must belong to them. they have captured in Sight of the harbour, twelve Sail, two of which (Coasters) have been recaptured by the *Mary Ann* privateer, and two others drove on shore in the late gale and lost to the Southward of the light. General [Thomas] Pinckney has loaned me thirty Soldiers to do duty in the guard Boats during the night. I have made a requisition on Lieut [Robert D.] Wainwright for fifteen Marines to do duty on board the guard-Ship, if complied with will enable me to take that number of Seamen from her, for the Barges: the Enemy appear well acquainted with our harbour-they approach very near, and avoid the Shoals when in chace which circumstance makes me believe they have pilots.

A Schooner Sailing fast, to carry about 10 or 12 guns would be of infinite Service in this harbour, to protect vessels chased within the Shoals, and after to withdraw the attention of the enemy from the chace, thereby enable them to escape, there is Such a one building and will be ready to launch in two Weeks, well calculated for this Service. there has been meetings of the Citizens here these two days to take into consideration the practicability of equipping the Merchantment & Privateers to engage and drive off, the blockading Squadron. there are no vessels here competent, and their plan will not succeed-they are clamarous for such a vessel as I have requested, and would I presume be purchased by the State and loaned to the Government.

Gun Boat *No 166* since cruizing in the Waters of Beaufort has given great Satisfaction to the Inhabitants in that quarter-her force is not competent to the protection and guard of so large a Bay, divided into many channels, I could purchase a small vessel here (that would go the

Inland passage) would carry one twenty four pounder and four Sixes and manned by forty men-I have suggested the plan for your consideration, Knowing Sir as you do, the Situation of the Inhabitants on the Waters of Port Royal, their exposed Situation to pillage from privateers, that will no doubt make use of that harbour during the winter for the purpose of Cutting off the inland Navigation, and capturing the coasters with rice &c. I Have the Honor to be [&c.]

J H Dent

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 129.

Commodore Rodgers Takes a Packet

Not many days after sailing from Boston, Commodore Rodgers's President *fell in with a British packet carrying a cargo of gold and silver. It was an easy catch and a highly desirable prize, for there was little question of the value of its contents and of the rapid adjudication that would follow in admiralty court. Packets, while little inclined to resist capture by a large frigate, generally put up a stiff resistance when menaced by smaller warships and privateers.*[1]

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[1] *See Arthur H. Norway,* History of the Post Office Packet Service Between the Years 1793-1815 *(London & New York, 1895), pp. 222-305.*

Commodore John Rodgers to Secretary of the Navy Hamilton

U.S. Frigate *President*
At Sea Octr 17th 1812

Sir

I have the honor to acquaint you that on the 15th Inst., near the Grand Bank, this Ship, the *Congress* in company, captured the British Kings Packet *Swallow*, Joseph Morphew Commander, bound from Kingston, Jamaica, to Falmouth. The rank of the commander of this Vessel is that of Master & Commander in the Navy. She had no Cargo in, except Eighty one Boxes of Gold and Silver, amounting to between One hundred fifty and Two hundred thousand Dollars: The Specie I took out of her and had intended sending her to England in the character of a Cartel, with her own Crew: Having fallen in at this moment however with the American Schooner *Eleanor*, bound from Baltimore to France, dismasted, induced me to change my first determination and instead of sending her to England have sent her to the U. States in charge of the Master and Crew of the before mentioned Schooner, who at the moment of writing this have charge of the *Swallow* with the Schooner in tow, but which, as soon as the weather will permit, they intend abandoning, after having taken her cargo on board the *Swallow*

I parted company with the *U. States* and *Argus* five days since, they are not however far from [me] at present I apprehend.

We have [fallen in with no] vessel of War as yet, except one Frigate, which the want of wind and the approach of night prevented our chasing with any effect: altho from information afterwards received we must have passed very near a squadron of Five Frigates the evening proceeding that on which we saw the one before mentioned. I have the honor to be [&c.]

Jn^{o} Rodgers

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 132.

Wasp, *Frolic*, and *Poictiers*

On 18 October 1812, Master Commandant Jacob Jones and his sloop Wasp *achieved a brilliant success in capturing the British sloop of war* Frolic *but then was overtaken and captured by a 74-gun ship of the line, H.M.S.* Poictiers. *The following documents include the Captain's Journal of* Poictiers *and the after-action report of* Frolic's *Captain Thomas Whinyates. Jones was taken prisoner with his crew into Bermuda and was not paroled until November. For his report see pp. 579–83.*

JOURNAL OF H.M.S. *POICTIERS*, CAPTAIN JOHN P. BERESFORD, R.N.

October 1812
Sunday 18th

Bermuda Northrock S 3° E 275 Miles

PM fresh Br and clear W. at 1 20 out 3 reefs of the Fore and Mizen Topsails at 2.10 saw 3 Strange sail SSE Made sail in chase & cleared Ship for Action at 4 fired Several Shot at the chase Observed Do hoist American Colours passed a vessel Dismasted at 4.40 Shortnd sail the chase having Struck her colours which proved to be the United States Ship of war *Wasp* Sent Boats with officers and men to Do & recd Prisioners wore Ship towards the Brig *Frolic* having been captured by the above ship sent officers & Men to Do at 6 fresh gales & cloudy Empd getting the Prisioners on Board made and Shortd sail as Necess at 11 up Quarter Boats Prizes and a Merchant Ship (one of the *Frolic* convoy) in Co Prisioners are officers & Men.

Remarks &c
Monday 19th

Am fresh gales and Squally Prizes and Merchant Ship in Co at 2.40 the Pinnace returned with the captain of HM Brig *Frolic* at 4 Strong gales and Squally with rain Handed the Topsails-at 6 wore Ship, and set the Main Topsail-at 8 fresh Gales and Squally-at 9 made Signal to steer S.W. at 9.20 in Main Topsail-Came to the Wind on the Starbd Tack, and set the Main Staysail-at Noon Strong Gales and Squally Prizes and Merchant Ship in Co.

Bermuda South 3 E 248 Miles

P.M. Fresh Breezes and Squally with Rain at times-made and shortened Sail as necessary-at 4 fresh Breezes & cloudy Wr. Prizes in Co.-at 5.20 down Pinnace, and sent her with a Hawser to the Brig at 5.30 got her in tow. at 6 do. Wr. at 7.30 bore up S.W. at 8 do. Wr. Lost part of the Log-line-at 9 set the Mizen Staysail-at 11 down Do.

At Midnight Do Wr. Prizes and Merchant Ship in Company.

Remarks &c
Tuesday 20

AM. Fresh Br & cloudy Wr. at 1 up Foresail at 4 modte Breezes and fine Wr. at 5.10 set the Fore & Mizen Topsails-Made and shortend Sail as necessary-at 7 fidded Top Gallant Masts-at 8.30 crossed Top Gallant Yards-at 9.30 saw a strange Sail bearing S.W. by W. at 10.30 hove to, and sent a Cutter to the *Frolic* and Pinnace to the *Wasp*-recd from Do. [3?] Prisoners, and from the *Frolic* eight wounded Men.

At Noon Fresh Breezes and fine Wr. Up Boats. Prizes in Co. Merchant Ship a head.

Bermuda West Shoal So 22 E 169 Miles

P.M. Fresh Breezes and fine Wr. at 12.15 bore up, and set the Foresail-at 3.15 out all reefs, and set Top Gallant Sails at 4 Do Wr. Brig in tow *Wasp* and Merchant Ship in Co. at 5 close reef'd the topsails at 6 do. Wr. at 7.20 set the Foresail at 8 Do. Wr. *Frolic* in tow.-*Wasp* and Merchant Ship in Co. at 9 set the Jib. at 10.40 out 4th reef of the Topsails-at 10.45 trimmed at 11.30 set the Mainsail. At 12 Modte & fine. *Frolic* in tow-*Wasp* & Merchant Ship in Co.

Remarks &c
Wednesday 21

AM. Modte & fine at 12.20 trimmed Sails. at 1 out 3rd Reef of the Topsails, and set T. Gt Sail made and shortened Sail as requisite-at 3 in T. Gt Sails & came to the Wind at 4 light Winds and vble with rain at times. *Frolic* in tow *Wasp* and Merchant Ship in Co.-at 7.45 saw a Strange Sail on the Weather Bow.-haul'd up S.S. East and made Sail at 8 Do. Wr-at 8.50 sent a Boat on board the *Wasp*-at 10 cast off the tow-at 10.15 tack'd Ship, and set Royals. at 11.45 in Royals at Noon Moderate and Cloudy.

Prizes & Merchant Ship in Sight. Stranger North.

Bermuda W Shoal S 30 E 83 Miles

P.M. at 1.40 trimmed Sails-Saw a strange Sail a head. at 2.20 hove to, and boarded an American Ship from Lisbon bound to Philadelphia with Licence-at 2.10 filled & made Sail. set Royals-at 3 wore Ship and shorten'd Sail-at 4 modte and fine Prizes in Co. at 5 up Mainsail-recd 9 Prisoners from the *Frolic*. at 5.30 filled at 6 light Breezes-at 6.15 in T. Glt Sails at 7 back'd the Mizen Topsail at 8 light Airs-Prizes & Merchant Ship in Co. at 8.20 up Foresail at 8.40 backed the M Topsail & in 2nd & 3rd reefs of the Mizen Topsail at 10 Calm at 10.30 a breeze sprung up from the Sd & Ed at 10.50 in 2nd & 3rd reefs of the Fore & Main Topsails-At Midnight Modte & fine-Prizes & Merchant Ship in Co.

D, UkLPR, Adm. 51/2694.

CAPTAIN THOMAS WHINYATES, R.N., TO ADMIRAL SIR JOHN B. WARREN, R.N.

His Majesty's Ship the *Poictiers* at Sea
October 23rd 1812

It is with the most bitter sorrow and distress I have to report to your Excellency the capture of His Majesty's Brig *Frolick* by the Ship *Wasp* belonging to the United States of America on the 18th Instant.

Having under Convoy the home bound Trade from the Bay of Honduras and being in Latitude 56°N and Longitude 64°W on the night of the 17th we were overtaken by a most violent gale of wind, in which the *Frolick* carried away her Main Yard lost her Topsails and sprung the Main topmast. On the morning of the * as We were repairing the damages sustained in the Storm, and reassembling the scattered ships, a suspicious Ship came in sight and gave chace to the Convoy.

The Merchant Ships continued their voyage before the Wind under all sail the *Frolick* dropt astern and hoisted Spanish Colours in order to decoy the stranger under Guns and to give time for the Convoy to escape about 10 o'Clock both vessels being within hail we hauled to the wind, and the battle began. The superior fire of our Guns gave every reason to expect its speedy termination in our favour. But the Gaff and the head braces being shot away, and there being no sail on the Main-

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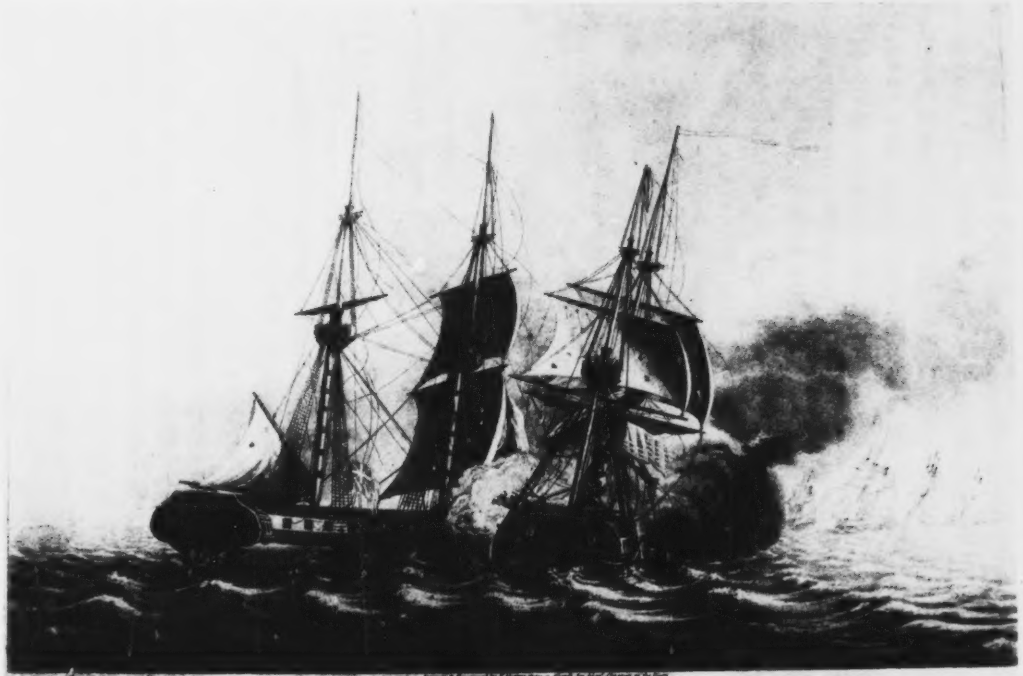

The CAPTURE of H.B.M. SLOOP of WAR FROLIC, Capt. WHINYATES, by the U.S. SLOOP of WAR WASP, Capt. JAs. JONES, on the 18th of [illegible]

1812 after a close Action of 43 Minutes [illegible] mast, the Brig became unmanagable and the Enemy succeeded in taking a position to rake her; whilst she was unable to bring a Gun to bear. After laying some time exposed to a most destructive fire, she fell with the Bowsprit betwixt the Enemy's Main and Mizen Rigging still unable to return his Fire. At length the Enemy Boarded, and made himself master of the Brig, every individual officer being wounded, and the greater part of the men either Killed or Wounded, there not being twenty persons remaining unhurt.

Although I shall ever deplore the unhappy issue of this contest, it would be great injustice to the Merit of the Officers and Crew if I failed to report that their bravery and coolness are deserving of every praise, and I am convinced if the *Frolick* had not been crippled in the gale, I should have to make very different report to your excellency. The *Wasp* was taken, and the *Frolick* recaptured the same afternoon by His Majesty's Ship the *Poictiers*. Being separated from them, I cannot at present transmit a list of killed and wounded. Mr Charles McKay the first Lieutenant and Mr [John] Stephens the Master have died of thier wounds I have the honor to be [&c.]

(Signed) T. Whinyates

To The Right Honble.
Sir J. B. Warren Bart KB
&c &c &c

Copy, UkLPR, Adm. 1/502, part 3, pp. 681-83.

Arrangements for a Hospital in Washington

The lack of proper hospital facilities for naval officers and seamen was a continuing theme of surgeons' reports to the Navy Department during the War of 1812. The following letter comments on that subject in the nation's capital.

Dr. Thomas Ewell to Secretary of the Navy Hamilton

[Washington]

Sir,

Agreeably to your permission for me to do my best, in relieving the present wretchedness of the hospital establishment; and providing for the approaching season, I have acted, and I trust you will approve of the act.

At present the public pay two hundred dolls pr annum for a miserable shell & two hundred more for the rent of a house for the Surgeon's mate to reside in: now for the addition of two hundred more, making six hundred dollars I have rented a large & convenient house, in which the Surgeon's Mate will necessarily reside most comfortably, thereby saving the rent he now receives; and in which an hundred sick men may be comfortably accomodated, so convenient as to be immediately under the eye of the Barracks officers.

At New orleans twice this rent is paid, at Washington, twice the demand exists for the building; and as I consider'd the arrangement as a most Judicious thing for the public; I did not decline it from the two conditions, insisted on; namely, that the house should be taken for six years; and that part of the rent should be advanced to the Proprietor; This Proprietor is Comdr Tingey & the house is the one he lately occupied. Respectfully yr [&c.]

Thos Ewell
19th Octr 1812

ALS, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 114.

The Observations of a Gunboat Commander

There are four gunboat logs extant from the War of 1812, but only one of them deals with the first year of the war.[1] *William Laughton, commander of Gunboat* No. 71 *was stationed at the Washington Navy Yard. His duties during the autumn of 1812 were not exciting, but his* *observations reveal the nature of the mundane but essential work of many gunboat officers and men. Fortunately, Laughton's account is written more in the expansive style of a journal than the terse language of the usual log. He apparently had little sea service but was aware that his treatment of events was unorthodox. On the last page of the log he wrote: "Should the Honorable Secretary of the Navy find any unnecessary observations in these remarks, he will be pleased to excuse them . . . for my own part it is the first remarks I ever made in the Service, therefore be pleased to believe that where ever I have made unnecessary observations it was from no other motive than to throw as much light as possible on how we spent our time."*

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1. See Claudia Bradley et al., comps., List of Logbooks of U.S. Navy Ships, Stations, and Miscellaneous Units, 1801-1947: National Archives and Records Service, Special List 44 *(Washington, D.C., 1978). The gunboats referred to are* No. 6 *(Aug. 23, 1813-Nov. 3, 1815),* No. 32 *(Nov. 25, 1813-Mar. 5, 1815),* No. 71 *(Sept. 10, 1812-Nov. 3, 1813), and* No. 81 *(Apr. 5, 1809-Feb. 28, 1814). These logbooks are part of DNA, RG24.*

REMARKS ON BOARD THE UNITED STATES GUNBOAT *NO. 71*
WILLIAM LAUGHTON, COMMANDER

[Extract]

1812. Saturday October 10.	This day Mr Davis the Plumber commences scuppers for Gunboat *No. 71.* Comodore Tingey agrees that I shall have two Davids for the stern of *No. 71* to enable me to hoist up my boat while under Way tending as usual all day in the Yard.
Sunday 11.	This day the colors were hoisted on the Frigate *Constellation* for the first time since she under went a thorough repair; Went to Church in the Navy Yard, The Hon. the Secretary of the Navy present &c &c
Monday 12.	This day made out a requisition to enable me to recruit a Crew for *No. 71.* Approved by the Comodore, went to Navy Department and received the sum of four hundred Dollars of the Bank of Columbia; returned to the Navy Yard Where I remained the latter part of the day.

Tuesday 13. This day Comodore Tingey gave me verbal orders to go to Alexandria to recruit men for *No. 71.* in compliance of which I took my passage in the Packet and went down to Alexandria, took lodgings and kept Rendesvous with [Acting] Lieut. [James] Sanders he recruiting for the *Constellation* and I for *No. 71.* We commenced this day, Paid Passage. Twenty five Cents; Do for Baggage Twenty five Cents; The latter part of the day employed procuring Musick for regular attendence at the Rendesvous which was opened at Sanguses Sailors Boarding house.

Alexandria.

Wednesday 14. Shiped a Man at Alexandria, Robert Forsyth, Landsman, paid his Jail fees on his landlords passing his word he would be his security his crime for being in Jail was only for fighting gave him the latter part of this liberty to take a cruise; No luck at the Rendesvous this day.

Thursday 15 This morning paid Mr Learey the balance of Robert Forsyth's advance he being present and owing it to Mr Learey say two months Adv. at 8$ prMo is $16.- Took him on board the Packet and brought him up to Washington Navy Yard. Reported him to Capt Haraden[1] who registered his name, afterwards took him to the Sergeant at the of the Navy Yard; and forbid his passing without my orders, or Orders Accountable persons in the Navy Yard, the put him on board the old *Green*,[2] among the other Gun boat men, and the people of the Ordy and arranged for his eating &c &c

Friday 16. This Morning after visiting the Navy Yard, and eating breakfast took passage in the Washington Packet to Alexandria to endeavor to procure more men, arrived at Alexandria at 12.

Passage Money, Twenty five cents $0.25

This afternoon remained at the Rendesvous endeavouring to procure men but not any to be had, owing to the horrid class of Licenced vessels, their, Crimps having twice in twenty four hours bribed, and taken away our Music, was to prevent our getting men.

My bills at Milburn's Tavern 4 d/ys.........$3.50

Saturday 17. Alexandria. This day concluded to leave of recruiting at Alexandria owing to the Demand for men for those sweet friends of the Nation, "The licenced traders" and for the opposition that appears to prevail here against us, and for the desire I have to be in the Yard to get the boat fitted out; At 4 P.M. took my passage in Winset's Packet and at 6 P.M. arrived at Washington, Paid passage Money & for Baggage $0.50

Sunday 18. Washington. This day visited the Navy Yard, several times, a No of gentlemen from the Navy Hill, went from the Navy Yard to Mount Vernon.

Monday 19. This morning at 10 A.M. I agreed with Mr Henry Burford, ShopKeeper to keep a Rendesvous for Gunboat *No. 71.* he not fixing on any particular price but engageing to make it reasonable as possible something however was to depend on the time I may want to keep it open; the remainder of the day attending in the Navy Yard.

Tuesday October 20. This day had scuppers put in the trunk comings or Hatchway, hung the Rudder and had my men scraping the Pitch off the seams &c. Capt Haraden informs me I must go to Georgetown tomorrow to bring Cannon for the boats &c

Wednesday 21. This morning at 9 A.M. Went with Mr Salvadore Catalano to Geo. Town to prove the Cannon.[3] Capt Haraden told me on Tuesday I was to bring down; returned at 3 P.M. Received several pieces of Iron work from Mr. Smith, Blksmith, that were assigned me by the Comodore & Captain Haraden, Mr. Smith also came into the Navy Yard and took several other dimentions of Iron work for Gun boat *No. 71.* finished the remainder of the day attending in the Yard.

Thursday 22. This morning at 10 A.M. Captain Haraden sent me off with a Gun-boat and Eighteen Men to carry twenty one pieces of old Cannon to the Foundery, and to bring back the Ten Caronades proved in my presence by Mr Salvadore Catalano the day before in consequence of the men not having provisions with them and calculating to be back much sooner I was obliged to procure refreshments for them which cost me $1.68 1/2

Got back to the Navy Yard at 8 P.M. thick black & Unsettled Weather Ends this day's Labour.

Friday 23. This day employed seeing the Cannon delivered to the respective Boats; Received my Steam Devits from the Blockmaker. Cost me, to crews of Gunboats to put my two

Cannon on board for Drink Money &c

this day till done with the Boat One Dollar $1.--

Saturday 24. This day attended in the Yard all day, Received Several pieces of Work from the blacksmith which did not fit, sent them back to be altered, this day all the carpenters broke off from the Gunboat except a Mr. Goff, and put on the *Constellation*, little or nothing done. . . .

William Laughton
Late Comr of U.S. Vessell *No 71*

ADS, DNA, RG24, Logbook of Gunboat *No. 71*, 10 Sept. 1812-3 Nov. 1813.

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1. Refers to Lieutenant Nathaniel Haraden.

2. *General Greene*, a frigate built in 1799, served as a receiving ship for gunboat crews and others during the War of 1812.

3. Salvadore Catalano, Sicilian pilot, guided Stephen Decatur and his crew into Tripoli Harbor to burn the frigate *Philadelphia* in 1804. From that time on, the navy treated Catalano with special consideration. He arrived in the United States in 1805 on board the frigate *Congress* and was paid off with the rest of her crew. On 7 Jan. 1806, Secretary of the Navy Robert Smith instructed Commodore Tingey to receive Catalano "into the public service at the Navy Yard under your Command, and assign him such duties as he may be capable of discharging." By a warrant of 9 Aug. 1809, Catalano was made a sailing master and for many years remained an employee of the Washington Navy Yard, generally working with ordnance. See *Navy Register*, various years, and Knox, *Barbary Wars*, V: 386 and VI: 337-38.

The Supplying of Gunpowder

The New York firm of Bullus, Decatur, and Rucker was engaged in the manufacture and supply of gunpowder for the Navy Department. The first of the partners, John Bullus, had been associated with the navy since the Quasi-War with France, when he had served as a surgeon on board the frigate United States.[1] *He was first appointed a navy agent for the Mediterranean squadron in 1807, and, after returning to the United States, Bullus continued to serve as a navy agent in the port of New York. That Bullus could serve both as a contractor to the navy in the matter of gunpowder and navy agent in charge of procurement in New York, shows that "conflict of interest" in public employees was not then considered as grievous a sin as it has come to be in recent times. Bullus's partners were John P. Decatur, Stephen Decatur, Jr.'s, brother, and John A. Rucker.*[2]

[1] *See Dudley W. Knox,* Register of Officer Personnel United States Navy and Marine Corps and Ships' Data, 1801-1807 *(Washington, D.C., 1945), p. 7; Knox,* Quasi-War *VII: 320; and Knox,* Barbary Wars *VI: 537.*

[2] *See real estate indenture of 1 July 1814, New York Historical Society, New York, N.Y., Miscellaneous Manuscripts, John Bullus Papers.*

BULLUS, DECATUR, & RUCKER TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

New York
October 27th 1812

Sir,

We have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your Letter of the 21st Inst. The 500 Barrels of Powder which we have delivered was made out of the 50,000 pounds of Saltpetre received from the Navy Department in 1811, & for which no particular price for manufacturing was mentioned, but an understanding that we were to be allowed so many Cents a pound, we think seven, our returning a pound of powder, for every pound of Saltpetre delivered, we finding the Sulpher and Charcoal, having furnished this quantity of powder, we beg to be informed what price we are to be allowed for it.

We beg leave to State that we took no advantage even at that moment when powder was in great demand and selling at $80., a Barrel of the three months notice which was to be given us before we should be called upon to deliver it, but furnished the whole of it immediately upon the requisition of the Commanding Officer. Having had a good supply of Saltpetre of our own on hand, the last parcel of Saltpetre which we received from Philadelphia, belonging to the Navy Department to be manufactured by us is still in Store, and from an accurate calculation which we have made find that the 13 1/2 cents for manufacturing agreeably to your Letter of the 21st Inst is not equal to 7 cents a pound, returning a pound of powder for every pound of Saltpetre delivered, and the manufacturer to find the Sulpher & charcoal. We have the honor [&c.]

Bullus, Decatur & Rucker

LS, DNA, RG45, MLR, 1812, Vol. 6, No. 243.

United States vs. *Macedonian*

After refitting during most of September, the U.S. Navy's small fleet was nearly ready to sail for cruises that would last into the winter months. Three squadrons composed of three ships each were to cruise independently in locations chosen by their commodores. Ideally, each squadron had a large frigate, a smaller frigate, and a sloop of war in company. Bainbridge in Constitution *was to sail with Porter's* Essex *and Lawrence's* Hornet*; Rodgers in* President *was to sail with Smith's* Congress *and Jones's* Wasp*; and Decatur in* United States *was to sail with Sinclair's* Argus *and Evans's* Chesapeake. *In reality,* Essex, Hornet, *and* Chesapeake *were not ready for sea when the larger ships were and departed later.* Wasp *was captured en route to her rendezvous with* President, Essex *never made rendezvous with* Constitution, *and* Chesapeake *did not sail from Boston until 12 December.*

Rodgers's and Decatur's ships sailed together from Boston on 8 October. Four days later, Decatur's United States *and* Argus *parted company with Rodgers, sailing in the direction of the Azores and then the Cape Verde Islands. By the 25th of October,* United States *and* Argus *had gone their separate ways. Decatur's ship was cruising in a southerly* *direction about midway between the Azores and Cape Verde Islands when he sighted the new British frigate* Macedonian. *The following documents are the reports of Captain John S. Carden and Commodore Decatur, respectively, narrating the battle from their own vantage points.*

CAPTAIN JOHN S. CARDEN, R.N., TO SECRETARY OF THE ADMIRALTY JOHN W. CROKER

American Ship *United States*
at Sea 28th October 1812.

Sir,

It is with the deepest regret I have to acquaint you for the information of my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty that His Majesty's late Ship *Macedonian* was Captured on the 25th Instant by the United States Ship, *United States*, Commodore Decatur Commander, the detail is as follows.

A short time after daylight steering NW b W with the Wind from the Southward in Latitude 29° 00 N and Longitude 29° 30 W in the execution of their Lordships orders, a sail was seen on the lee Beam, which I immediately stood for, and made her out to be a large Frigate under American Colours, at 9 OClock I closed with her and she commenced the Action, which we returned, but the Enemy keeping two points off the Wind I was not enabled to get as close to her as I could have wished; after an hours Action the Enemy back'd and came to the wind, and I was then enabled to bring her to close Battle, in this situation I soon found the Enemys force too superior to expect success, unless some very fortunate chance occur'd in our favor, and with this hope I continued the Battle to two hours and ten minutes, when having the mizen mast shot away by the board, Topmasts shot away by the caps, Main Yard shot in pieces, lower Masts badly wounded, lower Rigging all cut to pieces, a small proportion only of the Foresail left to the Fore Yard, all the Guns on the Quarter Deck and Forecastle disabled but two, and filled with wreck, two also on the Main Deck disabled, and several shot between wind and water, a very great proportion of the Crew Killed and wounded, and the Enemy comparitively in good order, who had now shot ahead, and was about to place himself

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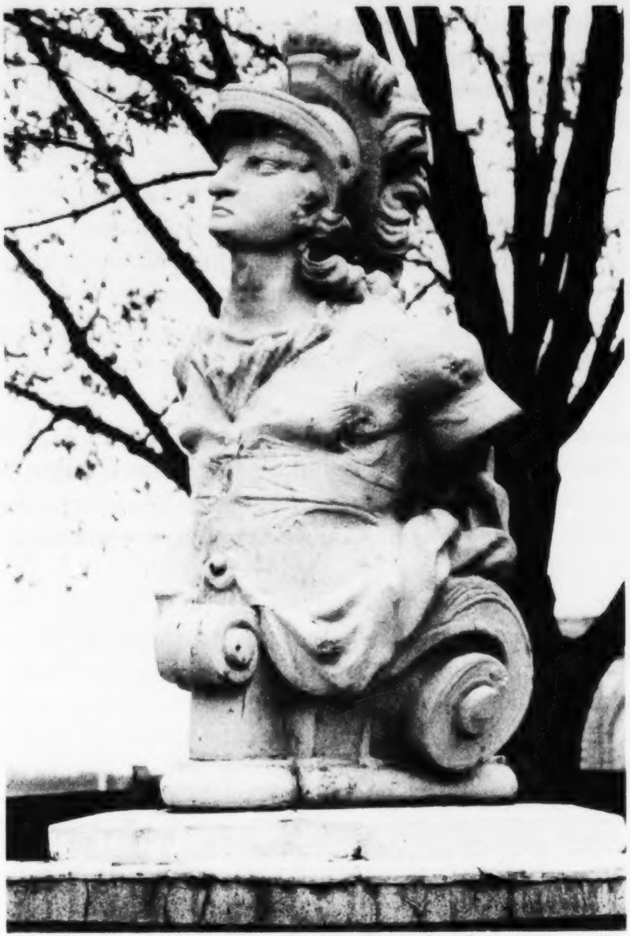

H.M.S. Macedonian *Figurehead*

in a raking position without our being enabled to return the fire, being a perfect wreck, and unmanagable Log.

I deemed it prudent th'o painful extremity to surrender His Magesty's Ship, nor was this dreadful alternative resorted too till every hope of success was removed even beyond the reach of chance, nor till I trust their Lordships will be aware every effort has been made against the Enemy by myself, my brave Officers, and Men, nor should she have been surrendered whilst a man lived on board, had she been managable.- I am sorry to say our loss is very severe, I find by this days muster, thirty six killed, three of whom linger'd a short time after the Battle, thirty six severely wounded, many of whom cannot recover, and thirty two slight wounds, who may all do well, total one hundred and four.

The truly noble and animating conduct of my Officers, and the steady bravery of my Crew to the last moment of the Battle, must ever render them dear to their Country.

My first Lieutenant David Hope was severely wounded in the head towards the close of the Battle, and was taken below, but was soon again on deck displaying that greatness of mind and exertion, which th'o it may be equalled, can never be excelled; the third Lieutenant John Bulford was also wounded, but not obliged to quit his Quarters, second Lieutenant Samuel Mottley and him deserves my highest acknowledgements, the cool and steady conduct of Mr [James] Walker the Master was very great during the Battle, as also that of Lieutenants Wilson and [George] Magill of the Marines.

On being taken onboard the Enemys Ship, I ceased to wonder at the result of the Battle; the *United States* is built with the scantline of a seventy four gun Ship, mounting thirty long twenty four pounders (English Ship Guns) on her Main Deck, and twenty two forty two pounders, Carronades, with two long twenty four pounders on her Quarter Deck and Forecastle. Howitzer Guns in her Tops, and a travelling Carronade on her upper Deck, with a Complement of four Hundred and seventy eight pick'd Men.

The Enemy has suffered much in masts, Rigging and Hull, above and below water, her loss in killed and wounded I am not aware of, but know, a Lieutenant and six Men have been thrown overboard.

Enclosed you will be pleased to receive the names of the Killed and wounded on board the *Macedonian*, And have the honour to be [&c.]

Jno S. Carden

J. W. Croker Esqr
Secretary to the Admiralty
London.

LS, UkLPR, Adm. 1/1663. The list of killed and wounded was appended, and a printed version can be found in *The Naval Chronicle* 29: 78–79.

COMMODORE STEPHEN DECATUR TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

U.S.S. *United States* at sea October 30 1812

Sir.

I have the honour to inform you that on the 25th Inst. being in the Lat. 29. N. Long. 29.° 30. W., We fell in with, & after an action of an hour & an half, captured his Britannic Majesty's ship *Macedonian* commanded by Captain John Carden, and mounting 49. carriage guns (the odd gun shifting)-She is a frigate of the largest class-two years old-four months out of dock, and reputed one of the best sailers in the British service. The enemy being to windward had the advantage of engaging us at his own distance, which was so great, that for the first half hour we did not use our carronades, & at no moment was he within the complete effect of our musketry or grape-to this circumstance & a heavy swell which was on at the time I ascribe the unusual length of the action. The enthusiasm of every officer Seaman & marine on board this ship on discovering the enemy, their steady conduct in battle & the precision of their fire could not be surpassed-where all have met my fullest expectations it would be unjust in me to discriminate. Permit me however to recommend to your particular notice my first Lieutenant Wm H. Allen, who has served with me upwards of five years & to his unremitted exertions in disciplining the crew is to be imputed the obvious superiority of our gunnery exhibited in the result of this contest.

Subjoined is a list of the Killed & wounded on both ships our loss compared with that of the enemy will appear small. Amongst our wounded you will observe the name of [Acting] Lieutenant Funk, who died a few hours after the action he was an officer of great gallantry & promise and the service has sustained a severe loss in his death. The *Macedonian* lost her mizzenmast, fore & maintopmasts and mainyard

& was much cut up in her hull The damage Sustained by this Ship was not such as to render her return into port necessary, and had I not deemed it important that we should See our prize [in?] should have continued our cruise. With the highest consideration and respect I am [&c.]

Stephen Decatur

List of Killed & wounded on board the *United States*-
Thomas Brown New York Seaman-Henry Shepherd-Philadelphia ditto-William Murry Boston-Boy Michael ODonnel New York private marine-John Roberts-ditto-ditto-Killed-
*John Mercer Funk. Philadelphia Lieutenant. *John Archibald-New York. Carpenters crew-Christian Clark ditto Seaman-George Christopher ditto-ordinary seaman-George Mahai ditto-ditto-William James ditto ditto-John Lalor ditto private marine-Wounded—
On board the *Macedonian* There were thirty six killed-& sixty eight wounded-Among the former were the Boatswain-one masters mate & the schoolmaster & of the latter were the first & third Lieutenants-one masters mate & two midshipmen-
*since dead

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 154. Signature, asterisks, and last line are in Decatur's hand.

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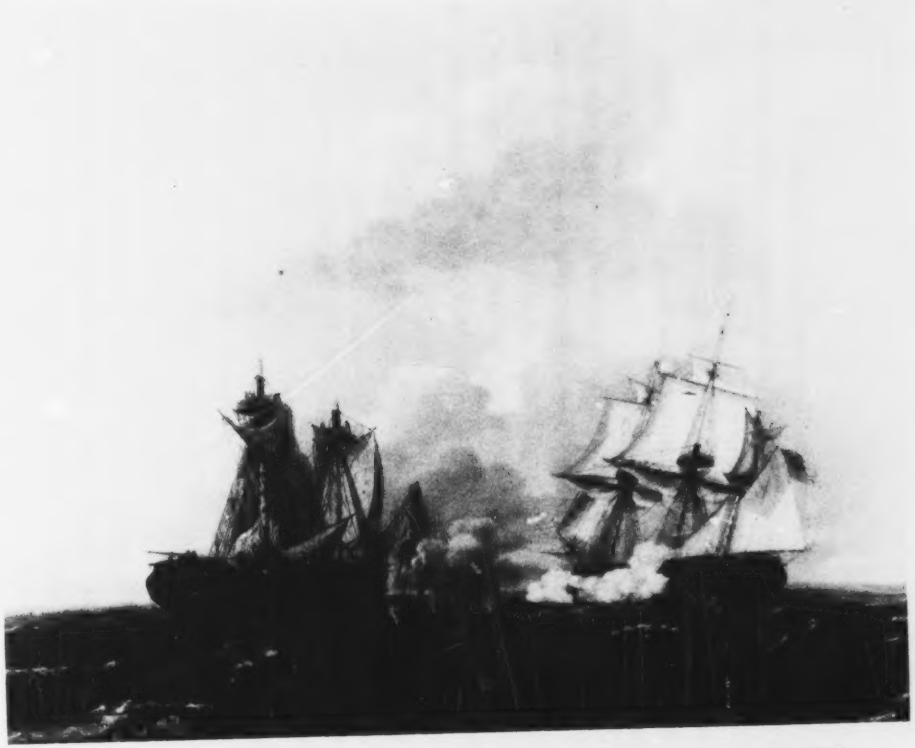

Capture of H.M.S. Macedonian *by U.S.S.* United States, *25 October 1812*

Condition of the Navy Yard at Portsmouth

The neglected state of the navy yard at Portsmouth is the subject of the report of Purser Tunis Craven which follows. The building of the yard had begun more than ten years earlier during the Adams administration. The failure of later presidents to complete this work had led to the virtual abandonment of the site. Craven's report portrays a navy yard in its crudest state, though blest by natural advantages lent by geography and a numerous population.

PURSER TUNIS CRAVEN TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Navy Yard Portsmouth N H
October 31st 1812

Sir,

I had the honor to report to you, my arrival on this station, under date of the 17th ulto and at that time stated the Situation of Public Property at this yard. Since then no alteration has been made. I respectfully beg leave to refer you to that letter, and to repeat, that, the Keel, floortimbers, and many other valuable pieces of Seventy four frames,[1] altho' under sheds, are laying on the ground, and will certainly receive material injury, if not total destruction, unless soon properly Secured. The timbers of the Slip, above high water mark, would be much benefited by a thick coat of pitch.

By this days mail you will receive drafts of this Harbour and Island, which I beg you will honor me by accepting. They are in part copied, from rough sketches, but principally drawn from actual survey, the soundings were taken by myself aided by an able Seaman. From the height of tides, the rapiditity, (between 5 & 6 Knots) and vicinity to the Ocean, the navigation of this Harbour is never impeded by ice, and of course is, all important in a Naval point of view, particularly at this Crisis. The Town of Portsmouth and adjacent country abounds in first rate mechanics in every department requisite to the building and compleat equipment of Ships. There are Gentlemen in Portsmouth who would become security for their building a Frigate in ninety working days. From the country bordering on the River, and district of Maine "pasture" Oak, Spruce Pine, esteemed the best for light spars and pitch pine equal to the Southern, can be obtained in any quantity and at very cheap rates. Ball and powder is also easily attainable from Massachusetts. From these circumstances from the Harbour being Safe and Commodious and of easier access than any other during winter I venture to suggest, the advantages that would result, from having at this Yard, such imperishable spare materials, as would enable our Squadron, from disasters of any kind, to obtain the necessary supplies without delay.

On the plan of Navy Yard Island I have taken the liberty of pointing out "Deep Cove" as a suitable place for a Dry Dock, there are many others, but that, appears by nature designed for one. in fact, nearly all the requisite materials for such a work, are on the Spot. from the bold rocky Shores, a labourer can quarry large Square Stones much faster than a mason could lay them. The dwelling house has two tenements one of which, I found, and is still, occupied by a Mr. Bowles employed by the Superintendant, and paid by the Department 300$ p. annum to take care of the Yard. With your permission, I will most cheerfully take due care of the Yard and property therein without any further compensation than the right of residence you were pleased to give me. I have the Honor [&c.]

Tunis Craven
Purser, U S Navy

ALS, DNA, RG45, MLR, 1812, Vol. 7, No. 3.

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1. In 1799, Congress authorized construction of six 74-gun ships to be built at Charlestown, Portsmouth, New York, Washington, Gosport, and Philadelphia. Preparatory work was done, but building was never completed. Built with some of the assembled timbers, ***Independence*** was finally launched at Charlestown 18 June 1814. For other correspondence regarding the neglected state of the timbers purchased for the 74s, see Bainbridge to Hamilton, 14 Apr. 1812, pp. 91-93.

Hospital Troubles at Charlestown

A poor relationship between the marine hospital and navy patients resulted in the ouster of several seamen of Constitution. *The document* *that follows states their pitiful condition and makes recommendations for at least a temporary improvement of the situation.*

LIEUTENANT JOSEPH NICHOLSON TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Navy Yard Charlestown 31 Octo: 1812

Sir

Allow me to trespass on a few of your busy moments to represent the situation I am placed in respecting the Sick & wounded Men on this station-two or three days ago Doctor [David] Townsend of the Marine Hospital informed me that a number (say 15) of the men belonging to the *Constitution* & others of our fleet had behaved improperly in the Hospital & must come out immediately, that they did not require Medical aid. the Commdg Officer of the *Chesapeake* offered to take them. they were sent for-but on observing their miserable situation Captn [Samuel] Evans sent them back to me. I then intreated Doctor Townsend to take them & in his presence wrote on the subject, offering every assistance in keeping them in propper Order & represented my having no place whatever to put them in on shore-all to no avail these poor wounded Seamen were turned from the Hospital Gates I have put them on board a Gun Boat. They are principally on Crutches with broaken & shattered limbs & the Surgeon of the Yard reported to me that some of them would shortly die for want of a more propper place to put them in. Captn Evans knowing these circumstances advised me to make this representation to you-Desertions frequently happen & our service suffers from the improprietys of this man. I am daily liable to be treated similarly by him, as he is not in the practice but "Inspector of Pot & Pearlash" & lives at the other extremity of Boston & consequently is obliged to trust & believe all his Fore-man may report of anything impropper from a parcel of Sailors uncontrouled by any one.

There is the left wing of the New Barracks unfinish'd & unoccupied allow Me Sir to suggest the propriety of appropriating a part of that Building to accommodate our Sick Seamen this winter. As we have many Sick on this station the Barracks would prevent much desertion–a very little expence will attend this method. With the highest [&c.]

Joseph Nicholson

ALS, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 138.

The Rate of Exchange of Prisoners

The question of how prisoners of war were exchanged is a complex one. The following document reveals the agreed-upon valuation of prisoners according to rank. One-for-one exchanges could only be made with men of equivalent rank. Otherwise, ratios were established on the basis of one officer of a given rank for a certain number of enlisted men. Since army officers and soldiers could be and were captured at sea, the same rules applied to their exchange.

LIEUTENANT WILLIAM M. CRANE TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Boston 31 Octb. 1812

dear Sir

I this morning received a letter from Cpt Jacob Lewis (at Washington) in which he desires, that, I will forward to the Honbl Secretary of State the rate of exchange established by the British Government, and given me by Lieut [William] Miller Agent for prisoners at Halifax–immediately after my arrival at this place I waited upon Comdr Rodgers and gave him all the documents furnished me by Lieut Miller, which after perusal he assured me would be transmitted to the Honbl Secretary of the Navy, amongst them was the original rate of exchange given me by Lieut Miller, I however enclose you a copy, which you will please dispose of as you think best and proper–The Admiral (Sawyer) assured me, that, my Officers crew and self should be exchanged for the Officers and Soldiers taken in the *Samuel and Sarah* transport by Cpt Porter, that is to say, provided our Government approved the arrangement–Lieut Miller did not furnish me with the papers until after the Cartel had got underweigh, and the number of persons on board prevented me from examining them at that time-: Lieut Miller however expressly told me, that, I should be at liberty to act again immediately after my arrival at Boston, and I left Halifax under that impression-the Officers and soldiers taken in the transport are without doubt either doing duty in the field or in Garrison-I regret giving you trouble but I feel desirous that you should be made fully acquainted with the circumstances and I request you will admit this as my apology-I have been excessively mortified in not being able to join the *Constitution* previous to her departure, the Commodore had asked me in the most flattering way and expressed his disappointment before leaving us-he recommended to the Honbl Secretary my appointment to this Yard until something better could be done for me. I wish for it at this time as I am very much distressed with a bad leg. I was accidentally hurt in the chase and after was left without a Surgeon as I thought it trifling the wound is now greatly enlarged and extremely painful-with very great respect and esteem I am [&c.]

W. M. Crane

ALS, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 137.

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Accounts of the Exchange of Prisoners of War With
Prisoners Sent from

At
British Prisoners Received

When Embarked	
In What Ship	
Whither Sent	
Admirals & Generls Commdg in Chief	60
Vice Admls & Genls. of Divisions	40
Rear Admls & Genls of Brigades	30
Chiefs of divisions	20
Captains of Ships of the Line and chief of Brigade	15
Captains of Frigates and chiefs of Battalion	8
Lieutenant in Navy and Captains in Army	6
Midshipmen or aspirants Master of Merchant Vessels and Commanders of Privateers & sub Lieuts in Army	3
Second Captains and Lieutenants of Mercht Vessels and Privateers all petty officers in the Navy & non commisd officers in Army	2
Seamen and Soldiers	1
Total according to the equivalent in men for officers exchanged	0
Ensigns in Navy and Lieuts in Army	4
When Received	
In What Ship	
From What place	
Adimrals & Generals	60
Vice Admls & Lieut. Genls	40
Rear Admls. & Major Genls	30
Commodores & Brigad Genls	20
Post Captains & Colonels	18
Commanders in Navy Lieut Colonels and Majors	8
Lieuts in Navy & Captains in Army	6
Lieutenants in Army	4
Midshipmen Masters of Merchant Vessels and Commanders of Privateers and ensigns in Army	3
Mates, all petty officers and non Commissioned officers in Army	2
Seamen & Soldiers	1
Total according to the equivalent in Men for Officers exchanged	

N.B. The numbers at the Tops of the Colums of Ranks Signify the equivalent in Men of those ranks respectively and according to which officers Belonging to either power, may with the approbation of the Naval Commander in Chief, be exchanged where there shall be no Officers of corresponding ranks in possesion of the other power

Signed W. Miller
Agent for Prisoners of War

Copy, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 137.

The Supply of Timber

The British had begun to blockade the southern coast of the United States, from Charleston to St. Marys, by November 1812. Trade was interrupted and supplies normally obtained from southern ports could not be depended upon. Commodore Thomas Tingey was concerned about the possible lack of timber needed for the repair of frigates in northern shipyards, much of which had been obtained from Georgia. The following letter demonstrates how the navy's construction plans were affected by these considerations.

COMMODORE THOMAS TINGEY TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Navy Yard Washn 7th Novr 1812

Sir

Conceiving it proper that speedy arrangements should be made for furnishing the Navy Yard at Portsmouth New Hampshire, with suitable materials for rebuilding one of the frigates, agreably to appropriations made the last session of Congress-I beg leave respectfully to state for your consideration that, I have proposals for furnishing at said yard, and also at New York from Savanna, Geoga) of their best quality Pine. The Square timber of the various descriptions and dimensions at 48 cents P Cubic foot, and all the sawed stuff, at the rate of 90 cents P cubic foot: the Government also to bear the risque of capture.

While from the vicinity of Portsmouth, the proposals offer their best yellow pine, delivered at that yard at the following prices viz.

Sawed pine Plank & thick stuff	36	cents P	Cubic foot
Do Do Carlines, ledges &c	33	cents	do
Beams and Square timber	33	do	do
White Oak Plank & thick stuff	60	do	do
Do Do smaller Sawed do	37 1/2	do	do
Do Do Square timber assorted	30	do	do
Elm Do Do Do	25	do	do

The obvious great difference in the price, and the certainty of obtaining the timely supplies, in the one case, and uncertainty in the other-leaves only the consideration whether-the intrinsic value of the southern materials, over the other-will justify that difference of expence, risque, and uncertainty. I conceive it my duty respectfully to state my opinion that it will not-if the materials are carefully selected in the north, by a judicious and experienced person.

All which is respectfully submitted for your consideration and instructions thereon. I have the honor [&c.]

Tho^{s} Tingey

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 170.

A Merchant in Search of his Goods

There are many victims in wartime, and merchants may have suffered more than most civilians during the War of 1812. In peacetime, communication between ports was slow and merchants were denied timely information concerning the existence of ready markets and good prices for their products. Those shipping goods overseas or importing from abroad faced vast uncertainties, against which they attempted to insure themselves. During the war conditions worsened and produced situations such as those experienced by the author of the next document. The ship carrying his goods had the misfortune to be captured by the British frigate Guerriere *before her engagement with* Constitution.

STEPHEN SINGLETON TO CAPTAIN ISAAC HULL

Commodore Isaac Hull Esqr
New York

Philadelphia 9 Novr 1812

Dear Sir,

I have taken the liberty to address you on the subject of some property that I had on board the *Gurriere* (say twenty Bales of Cloth) at the time of her capture by you, which Cloths were originally shipp'd for my account at Cadiz on board the Brig *Hiram*, Elijah

Adams Master to Boston, said vessel being captured by the *Gurriere* on the 13th of August and my twenty Bales of Cloth together with a number of other Articles belonging to the Captain taken out, and put on board the *Gurriere* particulars of which I have in a protest dated Boston Sept 4 1812.

Now my Dear Sir the object of the inquiry is wether any such Goods were on board the *Gurriere* at the time of her Capture, and what became of them afterwards.[1]

You will not think me impertinent in this inquiry when I inform you that the above shipment composed my all, after many years hard strugling with the boisterous Elements; and when in Cadiz last June, conceived this shipment as the only means of getting my property home in safety, not having the smallest idea that I should not arrive in time to cover the said goods by Insurance, which unfortunately was the case, and I am again obliged to apply to the smiles of Old Neptune for a livelihood.

I therefore flatter myself that the moment your many engagements will permit, to have your answer and that you may live long for our Countrys sake and Glory is the sincere prayer of Dear Sir, Your [&c.]

Stephen Singleton

LS, DNA, RG45, MLR, 1812, Vol. 7, No. 41.

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[1] Answer not found; but see Hamilton to Bassett, 21 Nov. 1812, pp. 577-79, which discusses the proposed terms of evaluating *Guerriere* and cargo for the purpose of assigning prize money to *Constitution*'s crew.

Oliver H. Perry at Newport, Rhode Island

Although anxious for a command at sea, Master Commandant Perry had to content himself with chores at the Newport naval station, where he was responsible for the activities of a small gunboat flotilla. The future commander of the Lake Erie squadron is shown in the *following documents as an officer assiduous in the care of men and materiel under his control. He had still two months of suspense to endure while awaiting the department's decision on his future duty station, but he did not leave this entirely to chance. He would soon write to the department requesting a command on the lakes.*[1]

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[1] *See Perry to Hamilton, 28 Nov. 1812, p. 354.*

MASTER COMMANDANT OLIVER H. PERRY TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Newport Novemr 10th 1812

Sir,

In a conversation this day with Doctr [Edmond T.] Waring who superintends the Marine Hospital at this place, I am informed by him that he has written you on the subject of a Naval Hospital-such an establishment has become indispensably necessary, as the Collector for this District (by order of the Secy of the Treasury) has absolutely refused to admit into the Hospital under his direction, any seaman belonging to the public service. The Gun-boats afford no accommodation for the sick. I have therefore been under the necessity of procuring a small room in one of the Barracks on Rose-Island for a temporary one, until I shall be honored with your orders on that subject. This is attended with many inconveniencies, and should the number of sick encrease, would be totally inadequate to the purpose.

Should you therefore Sir, think proper to order a House to be hired for a temporary Hospital, to be under the direction of Doctr Waring it would doubtless add much to the comfort of those who may be so unfortunate as to need one, while on this Station. Requesting you would pardon the liberty I have taken in suggesting the above, I am with respect Your Obt Sert

O. H. Perry

LS, DNA, RG45, MC, 1812, Vol. 1, No. 111.

MASTER COMMANDANT OLIVER H. PERRY TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Newport Novemr 10th 1812

Sir,

With the assistance of Mr Palmer, the proprietor of the Diving-bell, I have been so fortunate as to regain Gun, anchors, cables & Small quantity of the Shot &c of the late U.S. Gun-boat *No 46.*[1] Mr Palmer charges the Dept with one third the value for Salvage, which with your permission I will cause to be paid him-his vessel was considerably exposed in this business, & he has exerted himself to save as much of the public property as possible-the Gun above referred to is a 32 pounder, and is at present on Fort Wolcott, loaned to the U.S.-for which I have the comg officers rect until your pleasure is known. Respectfully [&c.]

O. H. Perry

LS, DNA, RG45, MC, 1812, Vol. 1, No. 112.

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[1] Gunboat *No. 46* capsized and sank in heavy seas off Conanicut Island on 29 Sept., drowning half the crew of eighteen men, including Lieutenant Samuel G. Blodget. See Perry to Hamilton, 1 Oct. 1812, DNA, RG45, CL, 1813, Vol. 7, No. 122.

A Sea Ruse

While it was still legal for American merchant ships to trade under British license, the practice was frowned upon by U.S. naval officers who attempted to check the practice. The document which follows presents an unusual, amusing incident by which an American navy purser, as prize master of a licensed trader, managed to evade capture by two British ships and return to the United States.

Purser Henry Denison to Secretary of the Navy Hamilton

Philadelphia, 11th November 1812.

Sir,

I have the honour to inform you that I arrived here last evening in the Ship *Ariadne* of Boston, cleared from Alexandria for Cadiz, with a cargo of above 5,000 barrels of flour, but detained by the U.S. Brig *Argus*, Capt [Master Commandant Arthur] Sinclair, for being under British licence. The *Argus* fell in with her on the 15th Ulto in Lat. 35.°49.′ Long. 56.°59.′ & by boarding under British colours obtained possession of her passport. I was ordered to take charge of her and bring her into the first port I could make in the United States. On the passage I fell in with two British cruisers, Viz. the Sloop of War *Tartarus* & Brig *Colibri*, & was strictly examined by each, but by making use of the licence and a little finesse, we escaped capture; the *Tartarus* even put on board of us nine American Seamen (prisoners) to assist in working the Ship. All the papers found on board I have submitted to Mr [Alexander] Dallas (District Attorney) but as yet he has not given me any decided opinion relative to the case.

The *Argus* separated from the squadron on the 13th Ulto & when I left her she had fallen in with nothing but the *Ariadne*. I have the honour [&c.]

Henry Denison

ALS, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 153.

American Trade with the British West Indies

The existence of war notwithstanding, the British West Indies were habitually dependent upon trade with the United States for supplies of food and other provisions. It was part of British policy to encourage American merchants to send their ships, protected by licenses, to ports easily accessible to West Indian planters. The following documents show a concern that this American trade be protected from interrup-

tion by United States naval vessels. To do so, the British urged American merchantmen either to sail under a foreign flag or to use a license which proclaimed the ship in question to be sailing to a neutral port, such as the Swedish island of St. Bartholomew. If any merchantmen were halted by the United States Navy, their papers would be scrutinized for proof of trade with British colonies. Thus the Admiralty effectively encouraged Americans to work against the best interests of their own government.

ADMIRAL SIR JOHN B. WARREN, R.N., TO THE LORDS COMMISSIONERS OF THE ADMIRALTY

Halifax 11th Novr 1812

My Lord

I beg leave to enclose the Copies of a Letter from Mr. Allen the Consul at Boston, together with some Instructions given to a Mr Nash from that place, who arrived here yesterday.

I should wish to be informed whether it is the intention to allow of St. Bartholemews, to be the Entrepot, for the Supplies of the West Indies, from the American States; or if Bermuda should be the Emporium for American Vessels navigated under the Swedish, or Portuguese Flags. I further beg leave to State, that I have been informed several Licenses from His Majesty's Government have lately been sent out to the United States; permitting American Vessels to Sail direct for Places in Spain and Portugal; if this should prove to be the fact, it is very necessary that some orders should be given to the several Flag Officers, upon the United Stations of Halifax, Bermuda, & the West Indies to enable them to act in conformity to the wishes of the British Government; and Copies or a note of such Licenses, should be transmitted, as on many occasions Forged Licenses have been discovered, which were manufactured in the American States, and from their multiplicity; will have a very bad effect in the Event of the War continuing between America and Great Britain. I have the honour to be [&c.]

John Borlase Warren

The Rt Hbl Lord Visct Melville &c &c &c

LS, UkLPR, Adm. 1/503, Part 1, pp. 51-52.

[Enclosure]
Private
Copy Boston 21st Octr 1812.
Sir,

I have been requested to introduce to you the bearer Captain Joshua Nash, deputed by one of the most respectable mercantile houses in this Country to procure from your Excellency, should it be deemed consistent with the views of His Majesty's Government, such protections as will enable him, or his principals, to furnish a supply of dry and wet Provisions necessary for the West Indian Islands, under American or other Colours. I have been given to understand, that the entrepot intended is the Island of St Bartholomews, and I am induced to believe, that under existing circumstances this destination is the best calculated to secure the successful execution of the object in question.

From my knowledge of the principals in this proposed business, and from the assurances which they have given me, I beg leave to observe, that whatever engagement may be entered into by the Bearer will in my belief be most honorably and completely fulfilled. I have &c.

Signed Andw Allen Jr.

His Excellency
Sir John Borlase Warren KB &c

Copy, UkLPR, Adm. 1/503, Part 1, pp. 53-54.

[Enclosure]
Memo. for Captain Nash

You will on your arrival at Halifax present to His Excelly Sir J:B: Warren your letter of Introduction from Mr Allen.

The object of your Mission is to procure from Adml Warren & Adml Sawyer (if the authority of both are necessary to the security of the object) Licences to Transport free from British molestation, supplies of Dry & Wet Provisions from any Port of the United States under American or other Colours, to the Port of St. Bartholomew. It has occurred to us that this Island may be made, during the present

War an entre pot from which supplies necessary to the West India Islands may be securely and easily distributed. St Eustatia & St Thomas during former Wars have been rendered the Mediums of communication whence the neighbouring Islands have been furnished with such Articles of Provision as their respective exigencies required.

It would be inexpedient & dangerous for Vessels sailing under American Colours to receive and use Licences from any Officer of the British Government, to proceed to a Port in possession of Great Britain, the existing laws of the United States rendering not only the use, but even the receipt of such Licence highly penal; Subjecting the Parties engaged in such Commerce, not only to a forfeiture of double the value of Vessels and Cargoes so destined, but also to Fine and Imprisonment.

Under such Penalties no individual on whom due reliance could be placed would engage in the undertaking. The impossibility of extending the object with impunity and the extra expences necessary to cover the hazards would render it utterly abortive. Whereas a neutral destination such as the Isle of St Bartholomew, would be attended with less difficulty in the outset and promise, with more certainty the accomplishment of the Ultimate Object.

If it should be found consistent with the views of the British Govt to afford you the necessary Licences to compass the end in view, we flatter ourselves you will be enabled to shew that the confidence which may be placed in yourself & in your principals will not be abused.

Should it be found inexpedient from any unforeseen event to use the Licences you may procure we pledge ourselves that they shall be delivered to our friend Mr Allen or disposed of in any way which the Admiral may see fit to direct.

We refrain from furnishing you with letters to any individuals at Halifax, persuaded, as we are, that no reference to private characters will be necessary when you are provided with the recommendation of Mr Allen.

You must particularly remark that under the existing laws of the Union no Citizen can with safety receive a Licence which even gives him an Option to proceed to a British Port and that it is therefore necessary that any protections you may obtain, shall not only be restricted to the Swedish Port of St. Bartholomew, but that all others shall be absolutely interdicted.

Boston Octr 23d 1812.

Copy, UkLPR, Adm. 1/503, Part 1, pp. 55-58.

Expansion of the American Navy

Despite initial successes at sea, it had not escaped U.S. policymakers that ships of the line, mounting 60 or more guns, would be essential if the American navy was ever to compete meaningfully against British sea power. During the summer of 1812, the British had but a small portion of their battle fleet on the North American station. Most Royal Navy ships of the line carried 74 guns and were stationed in the English Channel, in the Bay of Biscay, or in the Mediterranean on blockade duty. Until November 1812, the U.S. government believed that a few heavily built frigates would suffice to protect American commerce and seaports. But it was becoming clear that should the British achieve a land victory over the French, a much more menacing naval threat would appear on the American coast. American naval officers, conscious of this possibility, were anxious to commence a buildup of the fleet. To present the navy's case to Congress, Secretary Hamilton elicited a well-reasoned letter from Captain Charles Stewart of the frigate Constellation. *The document which follows contains Secretary Hamilton's argument, bolstered by Stewart's opinions. Hearings took place before the House of Representatives' Naval Committee during the period 4–27 November 1812. Virginia's Representative Burwell Bassett chaired that committee and presented its recommendations to Congress. For almost a month, naval and anti-naval spokesmen argued the merits of a larger navy.*[1] *Finally, on 23 December, Congress voted the first major naval construction bill in more than a decade. President Madison signed the "act to increase the navy of the United States" on 2 January 1813.*[2] *It provided for the building and fitting out of four 74-gun ships and six frigates of 44 guns each.*

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[1] *For a close study of the controversy surrounding the building of 74-gun ships, see Symonds,* Navalists and Anti-navalists, *pp. 171–91.*

[2] *Peters,* Public Statutes at Large, *II: 789.*

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON TO BURWELL BASSETT, CHAIRMAN OF THE NAVAL COMMITTEE OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

[Extract]

Navy Depart
13 Novr 1812

I have the honor of transmitting herewith for the information of the Committee of the House of Representatives, of which you are the Chairman, certain papers marked A. B. C. & D.

From the paper A it appears, that a 76 gun ship mounting 86 guns, discharges in one round 3176 lbs of cannon ball: that a 44 gun frigate mounting 54 guns, discharges in one round 1488 lbs of cannon ball: that a 76 discharges at one broad side 1588 lbs-and that a 44 gun frigate discharges at one broad side 744 lbs of ball. The question then arises, what is the intrinsic relative force of a 74 & a 44.

Suppose two 44 gun frigates should be brought into combat with a 76-one on the larboard-the other on the Starboard quarter-Each frigate presenting a broadside of 744 lbs of ball will have to contend against a battery of 1588 lbs. As 744 lbs is to 1588 lbs so would be the relative metal of a 76 & two large 44 gun frigates-difference against the frigates 844 lbs weight of metal. It is obvious then, that two 44 gun frigates could not contend with a 76 with the least probability of Success.

Suppose a third frigate, attacking alternately on the Starboard & Larboard quarter should join in the combat. While two of the frigates should be operating on one quarter with a difference in weight of metal against them of 100 lbs-the third frigate would be contending on the other with a difference against her of 844 lbs.

It might be observed that the frigates would all attack on one quarter & then with 2232 lbs of metal they would have to contend with only 1588 lbs having a difference in their favor of 644 lbs. In reply it may be observed; that three frigates could not take such a position, on any one quarter, as would enable them, to bring all their broad sides to bear at once upon an object moving through the water with as much celerity as themselves. Moreover a frigate would always avoid the broad side of a 76-for one well directed broadside from a 76, at close shot, would irresistibly blow her out of the water. Witness the *Randolph* with the *Yarmouth*.[1] Frigates would attack in various directions, change their positions frequently, and avoid the tremendous battery of a 76 as much as possible.

Besides a 76 is built of heavier timber is intrinsically much stronger, than a frigate, in all her works and can sustain battering much longer & with less injury. A Shot which would sink a frigate, might be received by a 76 with but little injury-it might pass between wind & water through a frigate, when it would stick in the frame of a 76.

All things considered it must be admitted that one 76 gun ship mounting 86-is equal in combat to three frigates mounting 162 guns. Admitting this equality, other questions present themselves for consideration, &

1st What is the relative expense of building & equipping these vessels?

2nd What is the relative numbers of their crews?

3rd What is their relative annual expense in actual Service?

To ascertain the expense of building & equipping a frigate, we will take the actual cost of one of our largest viz the *President*-which was $220,910-a frigate would then cost $220,910

The cost of a 76 cannot be easily ascertained, however from the papers B & C-we may I think, estimate the expense of building & equipping a 76 at not exceeding 333,000

The Construction then of a force in frigates, equal in combat, to a 76 gunship, would cost $662,730

and in this view a difference in favor of the 76 of $320,730

as then $333,000 is to $662,730-so would be the relative expense of building & equipping a 76 and a force in frigates equal to a 76 making a difference in favor of the 76 of .... $329,730.

By the paper A it appears, that a 76 requires to man her, 650 men and that a 44 requires 420-To man three 44 gun frigates, or a force in frigates equal to a 76, would then require 1260 men, and in this respect we find a difference in favor of the 76 of 610 men. that is 650 men on board of a 76 can direct as much force as 1260 can on board of three frigates.

As to the relative expense-we have heretofore estimated the annual cost of a frigate of 44 guns @ $110,000 and from the best information we can obtain upon the subject, the annual expense of a 76 will not exceed .... $202,110.

The annual expense then of three frigates, or a force in frigates equal to a 76 would be $330.000-while a 76 would not cost exceeding

$202,110: making in this respect, a difference in favor of the 76 of $127,890 annually.

In examining the relative strength of frigates & ships of war, and of ships of war & gunboats, we shall find similar results in favor of the larger class of vessels.

Hence if the only object in view was to employ the greatest intrinsic naval force, at the least expense, I should think, there would be no difficulty in deciding, that we ought to have none but ships of the greatest magnitude. But in providing a naval armament, there are other considerations of the highest importance. We should enquire what kind of force will most probably be brought against us-with what description of force can we meet the enemy with the greatest probability of success; and afford the most effectual protection to our commerce; and upon these highly interesting points I will take the liberty of submitting a very valuable communication received from Charles Stewart esquire,[2] a captain in the Navy of the United States-an officer of great observation, distinguished talents and very extensive professional experience-observing, that I believe all the most enlightened officers in our Service concur in the opinions, he has expressed. I have the honor [&c.]

Paul Hamilton

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1. On 7 Mar. 1778, east of Barbados, the 32-gun Continental frigate *Randolph* engaged the 64-gun British ship of the line *Yarmouth*. Just when she seemed to be on the verge of victory, having shot away *Yarmouth*'s bowsprit and topmasts, *Randolph* blew up. Gardner W. Allen, *A Naval History of the American Revolution*, 2 vols. (Boston and New York, 1913), 1: 296-97.

2. Captain Charles Stewart to Hamilton, 12 Nov. 1812, *ASP, Naval Affairs*, 1: 278-79.

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A

Statement shewing the number & description of guns mounted on vessels of different classes–the weight of ball in a round in each–the weight of a broadside, the number of men required for each: the annual expense in actual service of each, the annual expense computed by the gun: by each man: by the weight of metal; and the relative power of each man, in each description of vessel computed in weight of metal

Rrate of ships	No of 68 pd carronades on the poop	No of 42 pd long cannon on the lower gun deck	No of 24 pd long cannon on the upper Deck	No of 42 pd carronades on the qr deck	No of 32 pd carronades on the main deck or qr deck	No of 42 pd carronades on the Fore castle	No of 32 pd Carronades on the Fore castle	No of 9 pound long cannon	whole number of carriage guns	No of guns in a broad side	weight of ball in a round	weight of ball in a broad side	number of men	whole annual expense in actual Service	annual expense pr gun	annual expense pr man		annual expense pr each pound of metal		power of each man computed in weight of metal	
														Dollars	Dollars	doll	cts	doll	cts	lbs	oz
76	4	30	28	16		8			86	43	3176	1588	650	202,110	2350	310	9	63	63	4	14
44			30		16		8		54	27	1488	744	420	110,000	2037	261	90	73	92	3	8
16					18			2	20	10	594	297	130	50,202	2520	463		84	51	4	8
g-boat			1						1		24		36	12,500	12,500	347		520	83		10½

B

Estimate of the expense of building & equipping a 74-gun ship of 1620 tons prepared some years since by Joshua Humphrey esq. of Philadelphia-as ship wright of great respectability & professional Talents.

Live oak timber	40,000
White oak & pine &c	30,000
Labor	85,100
Cables, rigging &c	32,400
Smith's work	30,400
Anchors, marling	8,700
Sailmaker's bills, two suits including canvas	16,200
Joiner's bill including stuff	7,800
Carver's bill	1,620
Tanner's Do	700
Rigger's do	2,240
Painter's Do	3,240
Cooper's Do	4,860
Blockmaker's Do	3,240
Boat builder's Do	1,620
Plumber's Do	2,430
Ship chandlery	9,720
Turner's bill	1,215
Copper bolts	10,960
Sheathing copper, nails &c	17,440
Woolens for sheathing	1,215
	311,100
Contingencies	31,600
	$342,700

Notes by an experienced gentleman.

"Labor" this item was calculated at a time when ship carpenters wages were $2.50 pr day. They can now be obtained @ $2.

"Cables & rigging" when the above Estimate was made the price was 16$ they can now be obtained @ $15.

"Carvers bill" expensive carving on the head & Stern is abolished 1000$ may be deducted from this item

"Riggers bill" we employ Seamen-@ 12$ pr month-this item may be considerably reduced.

"Painter's bill" the present practice of painting our ships of war differs so much from that first adopted, both in point of labor & colors, that one third of this item may be safely deducted.

"Woolen for sheathing" now exploded-experience having established the fact, that it occasions an absorption & retention of salt water which corrodes the copper inside &c nor could the copper be laid on so smooth as without it.

"Contingencies" at the time the above Estimate was made we had no yards, of course wharfage or rent of yard was then included & we do not now, as then, give such quantities of rum to laborers. This item may be reduced one half.

C

The frigate *President* of 1444 tons cost 220,910$ say pr ton 153, a 76 will ton 1620.

Then to ascertain the probable cost of building and equipping a 76.

1620 tons @ 153$	$247,860
additional guns & gun carriages	18,599
additional cubic feet of timber in the frame at 4000 feet @ $125	5,000
Additional weight of rigging anchors & other materials 10 pr Ct on the cost of the Tonnage viz 247,860	24,786
	$296,245

Say 300,000

D

Statement shewing the proportions of able Seamen ordinary Seamen & Boys required for a ship of the Line-say a 76-and a 44 gun frigate

	able Seamen	ordinary Seamen & boys
a 76 requires	280	233
44	140	172

Note 280 Able Seamen is considered by practical men as too great a proportion for a first rate 76. The whole no of able & ordinary Seaman & boys is 513-and

practical men say that they may be classed thus

able Seamen	ordinary seamen &c
220	293

It is observed by those acquainted with ships of the Line that to manage their Sails does not require more able Seamen than are required to manage the sails of a large frigate.

A force in frigates equal to a 76 would then require 420 able Seamen-a 76 would require 220 making a difference in this respect of 200 able Seamen in favor of the 76 . . . .

Copy, DNA, RG45, Secretary of the Navy Letters to Congress, Vol. 1, pp. 117-24.

Guerriere's Worth as a Prize

Constitution *fought* Guerriere *so effectively that the British frigate was an unmanageable hulk at the end of the battle. She was destroyed several hours later, after the wounded and killed had been taken off. The destruction of the enemy ship meant that* Constitution*'s crew would be unable to obtain material reward for* Guerriere*'s capture, unless the government acted to compensate them in lieu of prize money. In the following letter, Secretary of the Navy Hamilton explains the method of evaluating* Guerriere*, her stores, and the prize goods that were captured on board. Hamilton recommended to Congress that Captain Hull, his officers, and men be rewarded with the sum of $100,000 in lieu of prize money. On 26 November, Representative Burwell Bassett offered such a resolution and won a favorable vote, but the matter was tabled until pertinent documents could be printed.*[1] *The matter was not reconsidered until February 1813, when news of* Constitution*'s victory over the frigate* Java *had reached Washington. Commodore William Bainbridge had been obliged to destroy* Java *for the same reason that Hull sank* Guerriere*. As a result, Congress decided to combine the rewarding of both Bainbridge and Hull in the same resolution.*[2] *To this was added a reward to Master Commandant Jacob Jones and crew for the capture of* Frolic.

When the final resolution was passed, on 3 March 1813, congressional generosity had diminished, and the final award was $50,000 for Hull, officers and crew; $50,000 for Bainbridge, officers and crew; and $25,000 for Jones, officers and crew.[3]

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[1] *U.S. Congress,* Annals of the Congress of the United States, *42 vols. (Washington, D.C., 1834–1856), 12th Congress, Second Session, pp. 199–200.*

[2] *Ibid., pp. 1113–14.*

[3] *Ibid., pp. 1349.*

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON TO BURWELL BASSETT, CHAIRMAN OF THE NAVAL COMMITTEE OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Navy Department
21st November 1812.

Sir

In order to enable the Committee to form a satisfactory opinion as to the compensation to be provided for the officers and crew of the frigate *Constitution*, for the capture and subsequent destruction of the British frigate, the *Guerriere*, I have the honor to state to you, that the *Constitution* rated 44, and mounted 55 guns,-that the *Guerriere* rated 38, and mounted 54 guns. The *Guerriere* altho entirely dismasted and in other respects much crippled, could have been brought into port, without incurring any other risk than that of recapture; but Captain Hull conceived that if he had manned the *Guerriere* for the purpose of sending her into Port, he would have so far reduced the crew of the *Constitution*, that he might have subjected both vessels to capture. He presumed that, under all circumstances, it would be better for him to destroy the *Guerriere*, and preserve the force of the *Constitution* unimpared-and his having done so unquestionably proceeded from the most patriotic considerations.[1]

The *Guerriere* was a frigate of the first class in the British Navy: and no doubt when the engagement between the *Constitution* and her commenced, she was completely fitted in all respects for the most serious service. The cost of such a ship, independently of her stores, could not have been less than 200,000$ and her stores were worth, in all probability 50,000 at least-besides she had on board a number of prize goods. the value of which can't be ascertained-but was probably equal to 50,000$ more. So that the whole value of the *Guerriere*, her stores and prize goods at the time the action commenced may fairly be estimated at 300,000 Dollars.

Had Capt. Hull have incurred the risks before mentioned and succeeded in getting the *Guerriere* into Port. The Officers and crew *Constitution*, considering the *Guerriere* as her equal, would have been entitled to the whole of the *Guerriere*, her stores and prize goods.-sooner however than run the risk of losing the *Constitution*, he determined to destroy the whole. The question then arises, what, under these circumstances, ought the officers and crew to be allowed? For my own part, I have no hesitation in offering it as my opinion, that the sum of one hundred thousand dollars, would not be too liberal a provision, or too great an encouragement for the great gallantry, skill, and sacrifice of interest displayed on the occasion-and am persuaded that if such a provision were made, the difficulties of manning our frigates, at present experienced, would vanish.

It may further be remarked, that Capt. Hull, while on the cruize, in which he captured and destroyed the *Guerriere* burnt two enemy's vessels, viz. the brig *Lady Warren*, and the Brig *Adeona*, and obliged the enemy to burn the brig *Dolphin*, with a Cargo of hemp and Russia Goods, and to abandon an English barque laden with Timber-For no part of which have the officers or crew of the *Constitution* received any compensation. I have the honor to be [&c.]

Paul Hamilton

Copy, DNA, RG45, Reports of the Secretary of the Navy, 1811-1819, Vol. 2, pp. 76-77.

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1. See also letter of Captain Isaac Hull to Burwell Bassett, 23 Nov. 1812, which responds with similar information to a question from Bassett, DNA, RG45, Reports of the Secretary of the Navy, 1811-1819, Vol. 2, p. 77.

The Loss of U.S. Sloop *Wasp*

The events of 18 October 1812 may have marked both the highest and lowest points of Master Commandant Jacob Jones's career. In a *savage action only five days after having sailed from the Delaware,* Wasp *captured H.M. sloop* Frolic. *But* Wasp *was not destined to arrive at her rendezvous with* Constitution, *for only hours later the 74-gun* Poictiers *came up with* Wasp *as Jones was repairing battle damage.* Wasp *was unable to escape and to resist would have been suicidal. About one month later, Jones and his men were paroled and returned to New York where Jones wrote the following report. Congress awarded the* Wasp's *officers and crew $25,000 prize money and the Navy Department promoted both Jones and James Biddle, his first lieutenant. Jones received command of the captured* Macedonian *and Biddle soon became commander of the sloop* Hornet.

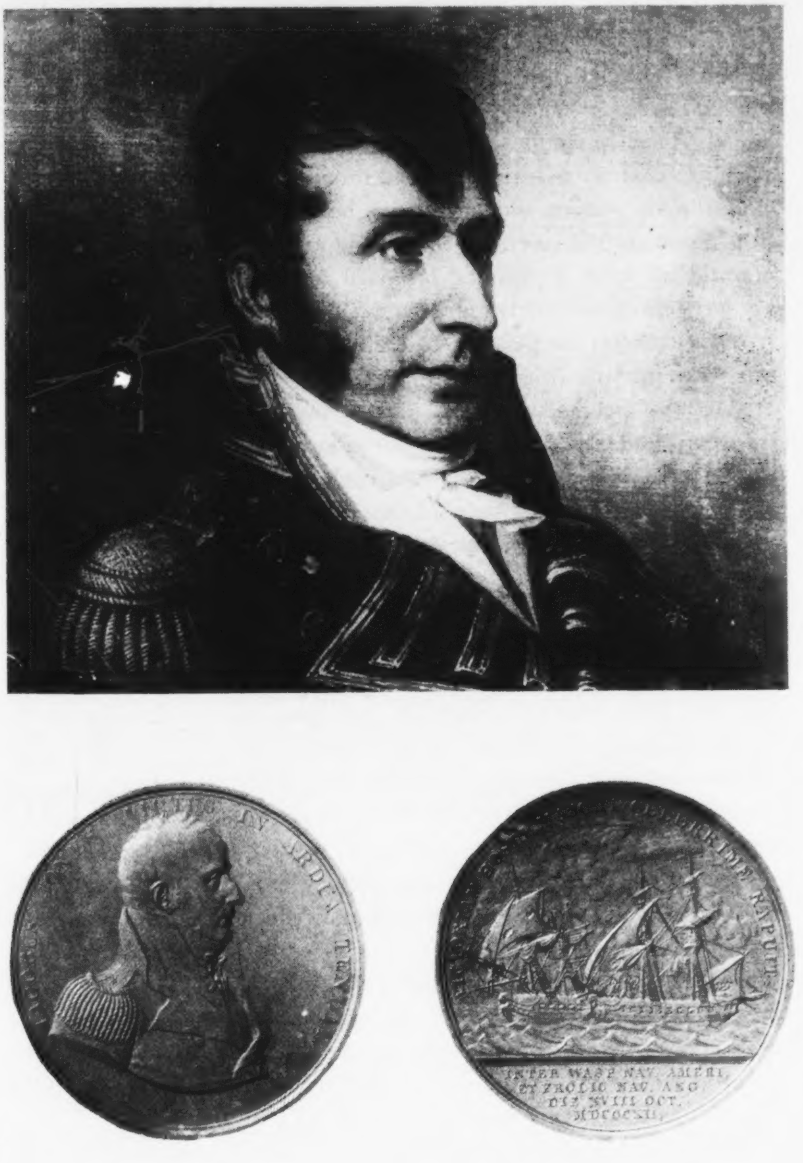
MASTER COMMANDANT JACOB JONES TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

New York the 24th Novemr 1812

Sir,

I here avail myself of the first opportunity of informing you of the occurrences of our cruise, which terminated in the capture of the *Wasp* on the 18th of October by the *Poictiers* of seventy four Guns, while a wreck from damages received in an engagement with the British sloop of war *Frolick* of twenty two guns, sixteen of them thirty two pound carronades, and four twelve pounders on the main deck and two twelve pounders, carronades on the topgallant forecastle, making her superior in force to us by four twelve pounders. The *frolick* had struck to us and was taken possession of about two hours before our surrendering to the *Poictiers*.

We had left the Delaware on the thirteenth-the sixteenth had a heavy gale in which we lost our jibboom and two men, half past eleven on the night of the seventeenth, in the Latitude of 37° N. & Longitude of 65° W. we saw several sail, two of them appearing very large, we stood from them for some time, then shortened sail and steered the remainder of the night the course we had perceived them on. At day light on Sunday the eighteenth we saw them ahead,-gave chase and soon discovered them to be a convoy of six sail under the protection of a Sloop of War, four of them large ships mounting from sixteen to eighteen guns. At thirty two minutes past eleven A.M. we engaged the Sloop of War having first received her fire at the distance of fifty or sixty yards, which space we gradually lessened


INTER WASP NAV. AMERI.
ET FROLIC NAV. ANG.
DIE XVIII OCT.
MDCCCXII.

Captain Jacob Jones, U.S.N., and the gold medal presented to him by Congress for the capture of H.M. sloop Frolic *by U.S. sloop* Wasp until we laid her on board, after a well supported fire of forty three minutes; and altho so near while loading the east broad side that our rammers were shoved against the side of the enemy our men exhibited the same alacrity which they had done during the whole of the action. They immediately surrendered upon our gaining their fore castle, so that no loss was sustained on either side after boarding.

Our maintopmast was shot away between four and five minutes from the commencement of the fireing and falling together with the maintopsail yard, across the larboard fore and fore topsail braces, rendered our head yards unmanageable the remainder of the action. At eight minutes the gaft and mizen top gallant mast came down and at twenty minutes from the beginning of the action every brace-and most of the rigging was shot away. A few minutes after separating from the *Frolick* both her masts fell upon deck, the Main mast going close by the deck and the foremast twelve or fifteen feet above it.

The courage and exertions of the officers and crew fully answered my expectations and wishes. Lieut. [James] Biddles active conduct contributed much to our success by the exact attention paid to every department during the engagement and the animating example he afforded the Crew by his intripidity. Lieut [George W.] Rodgers, [Midn. Benjamin] Booth & Mr [Midn. Henry B.] Rapp shewed by the incessant fire from their divisions that they were not to be surpassed in resolution or skill. Mr [Sailing Master William] Knight and every other officer acted with a courage and promptitude hightly honourable, and I trust have given assurance that they may be relied on when ever their services may be required.

I could not ascertain the exact loss of the enemy as many of the dead lay buried under the masts and spars that had fallen upon deck, which two hours exertion had not sufficiently removed. Mr. Biddle who had charge of the *Frolic*, states that from what he saw and from information from the Officers, the number of the killed must have been about thirty and that of the wounded about forty or fifty-of the killed is her first Lieutenant and sailing master, of the wounded Capt. [Thomas] Whinyates and the Second Lieutenant.

We had five killed and five wounded as per list the wounded are recovering. Lieutenant [Alexander] Claxton who was confined by sickness, left his bed a little previous to the engagement and tho' too weak to be at his division, remained upon deck and shewed by his composed manner of noting its incidents, that we had lost by his illness the services of a brave Officer. I am respectfully yours,

Ja^{c} Jones

ALS, DNA, RG45, MC, 1812, Vol. 1, No. 118.

The War Comes to Charleston

Nestled in the embrace of the Ashley and Cooper Rivers and guarded by Fort Moultrie, Charleston provided a natural harbor where commerce thrived in peaceful times. During the first year of the War of 1812, the British gradually extended their blockade southward from the Delaware and Chesapeake capes. By the fall months, ports along the southeastern coast of the United States were being closely watched. The letters which follow give expression to the concerns of Captain John H. Dent, commander of the Charleston naval station. Of particular interest, are those which refer to his purchase of two schooners for the navy. The smaller Ferret *saw duty along the Carolina coast, but the better-known* Carolina *eventually arrived at New Orleans and played an important role in the defense of that city during the British amphibious attack of December 1814–January 1815.*

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON TO CAPTAIN JOHN H. DENT

John H. Dent
Charleston, S.C.

Nav: Dep'mt
24. Octo: 1812

Your letter, of the 17 Inst: has been received.

Comr Bainbridge, with the squadron under his command, has been ordered to Charleston, to clear the coast of the Enemie's cruizers.[1]

You will procure the two vessels on the best terms in your power, prepare them, with all possible expedition, for the purposes suggested by you.

P. Hamilton

Copy, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 10, p. 186.

[1] Evidently, Secretary Hamilton's orders did not reach Commodore Bainbridge before he sortied from Boston, and a similar order sent to Captain Porter at Chester on the Delaware also did not arrive in time; see Hamilton to Dent, 22 Oct. 1812, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 10, p. 185.

CAPTAIN JOHN H. DENT TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Charleston 5th Nov. 1812.

Sir

Your letters of the 22nd & 24th ult. I had the honor to receive.

I have purchased the vessels required one a new Schooner, will carry 14 Guns and ninety men, will be launched on Tuesday next. She is a remarkable fine vessel, constructed for war and will Sail fast, all her materials are in hand and will be ready for Sea in thirty days if men can be procured. The other a Small Schooner Sails fast will carry, eight, 6 pound, and one long, 12 on a circle, fitted and will proceed to her Station, Beaufort, in ten days called the *Ferret*.[1] The new Schooner is not named. I have in her bills &c called her the *Carolina*, untill officially named.

By the Arrival of the Cartel from Providence, I learn that the Squadron lately cruizing off this port, had returned to port to refit, having sustained some injury in the late gale; they were to sail in a few days for this station. I hope the *Essex* will be here in time I also learn from our prisoners, that they are very apprehensive a force will be sent to cut them off, and are on the look out. I would recommend, that the Squadron approach the bar from the Southward, by which the enemy being close in will be embayed. I Have the Honor to be [&c.]

J H Dent

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 166.

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[1] This was the second vessel named *Ferret* to be commissioned in the U.S. Navy. The first *Ferret*, a schooner built at Gosport Navy Yard, was commissioned in 1809. She was rerigged as a brig and renamed *Viper* in 1810.

Captain John H. Dent to Secretary of the Navy Hamilton

Charleston. 14th November 1812.

Sir

Your letter of the 4th Inst I have had the honor to receive, and have communicated its contents to Major General [Thomas] Pinckney

I have been very successful in recruiting the last week, having entered Thirty men for the service. The Schooner *Ferret* mounts nine guns, and will Sail for Beaufort in five days, having no commissioned Officers and but one Midshipman. I have made Mr John Smith an acting Master in the Service, and given him the command of the *Ferret* He is an active intelligent Gentleman & (if confirmed) will be of infinite benefit to the Service, as he is well acquainted with this Coast and its inlets. The late rains have prevented the new Schooner's launch at the specified time, She will be launched this day all her materials are ordered and in hand. The grape Shot and Sabres lost on Cape Hatteras are much wanted, none can be had here. I Have the Honor to be [&c.]

J H Dent

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 177. Endorsed at foot of letter: "Confirm him P.H."

Captain John H. Dent to Secretary of the Navy Hamilton

Charleston 14th Novr 1812

Sir

The British Frigate *Southampton* was close in with our bar all day yesterday. She has been on the coast about ten days with two brigs in company; I have been in daily expectation of seeing or hearing from Capt Porter or Commodore Bainbridge and have kept a pilot boat Cruizing in the offing and off Cape Roman with the private Signal, charged with letters, giving information of this Squadron. They are not in Sight this morning. it is a great misfortune that the *Essex* did not come directly off this harbour as Sir James [Yeo] would have been gratified in meeting Capt Porter. I Have the Honor to be [&c.]

J H Dent

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 178.

CAPTAIN JOHN H. DENT TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Charleston Novr 16th 1812.

Sir

I have the honor to enclose for your information, the copy of a letter and an extract from the log book of Gun Boat *No 166*, commanded by Sailing Master [James] Mork, also an extract of a letter from Lieut [Charles F.] Grandison, relative to the Situation of the Barges at Sunbury.[1]

The Enemy's cruizers have not been seen since Saturday, when a frigate was at anchor off the bar; The *Ferret* will be so far manned as to dispatch her to Port Royal in a few days, the remainder of the men can be sent to her in a barge. The deportment and activity of Sailing Master Mork since at Beaufort Justifies the good opinion entertained of him as an officer. The new Schooner [*Carolina*] was launched on Saturday, and if Men can be procured will be ready for sea in 25 days as every thing is in hand and her rigging all ready to go over mast head; the want of greater part of the munitions of war on this station is greatly felt. the grape, Shot, Sabres, &c lost on Cape Hatteras can not be supplied here: will you order a commissioned officer & ten Midshipmen to this Station, as little confidence can be placed in these. I am obliged to employ as Substitutes, Mr [John H.] Carr the purser has been in very bad health for some time & not able to attend to duty, which devolves upon me. I Have the Honor to be [&c.]

J H Dent

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 181.

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[1] The enclosures, filed with the letter, consist of Mork to Dent, 9 Nov. 1812, "Extract from the log book of U.S. Gun Boat *No 166*" for 5 and 6 Nov. 1812, and an extract from Grandison to Dent, 12 Nov. 1812.

CAPTAIN JOHN H. DENT TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Charleston 24th Novr 1812.

Sir

I am sorry to inform you the Surgeon's House (Doctor Logan's) was burn't in the late fire with all the medicines, Hospital Stores, and instruments belonging to this Station-a list thereof I enclose.

I have been desirous that the Naval Hospital should be established in the Navy Yard, where a Small building could be erected to answer that purpose; there is no establishment at present, and if authorized I could at a small expence erect the necessary buildings, the Surgeon's instructions authorizes him to rent such quarters as he requires in Town, and the expence of this establishment has been greater than was necessary. I have the Honor [&c.]

J H Dent

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 190.

[Enclosure]

(Copy)

Return of Medicine and U.S. Hospital Stores accidentally destroyed by Fire in the Night of the 19th Inst. viz

One large Medicine Chest complete.
One Small Ditto.
One Sett Amputating instruments.
Sundry Articles of Hospital Stores.

The Surgeon having lost all his Books, papers and documents, in the Said Conflagration, is unable to determine with precision the number & value of the foresaid articles.

(Signed) George Logan
Charleston, S.C. 23rd Novr 1812.

Commodore Dent.

Copy, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 190.

Captain John H. Dent to Secretary of the Navy Hamilton

Charleston 26th November, 1812.

Sir,

The irregular proceedings relative to prisoners of war in this port has been attended with much difficulty and Some loss to the Service, as I apprehend from permitting them to be landed and not regularly transferred to the Marshal, Several have entered the Service, as American Citizens, and taken the necessary Oaths, and advance; I have discharged all such claimed, from the Service; this might be easily remedied, by Stopping all privateers and prizes at the guard vessel, taking out the prisoners and delivering them, to the proper person appointed to take charge of them; I have in every instance offered my assistance to the Marshal in preventing this abusive proceeding, and suggested this mode which does not appear to be agreeable to his ideas on the Subject; also the proceeding of the Cartel while in this port was irregular and contrary to the established usages of all other nations, She was permitted to come to the wharf, without a guard, to make Such alterations in her crew, as her Commander required, and to refit and grave his vessel to go only on a voyage to Providence where She had been fitted for this service; these proceedings have given great dissatisfaction, and I was not without fears that she would have been dismantled by a Mob, as they prevented many Articles from being Shipped on board, there has also been three Midshipmen prisoners, those gentlemen have been paroled, and permitted to go indiscriminately in all parts of the City, wharves & afloat, and have since joined the Squadron now off this coast, possessed with all the information, Such advantages afforded them to obtain: as Commanding the port I cannot but feel Mortified when I am applied to prevent those abuses, and have to reply I am not authorized, as not coming within my department. I have suggested those hints in hopes Sir, that some arrangement may be made in future, to prevent such irregularities, and reflections on the Officers of the goverment. I had fitted a prison Ship in Co-operation with General [Thomas] Pinckney in hopes that it would have been adopted, which under the arrangement made between us, would have prevented any irregularities. I Have the Honor to be [&c.]

J H Dent

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 192.

CAPTAIN JOHN H. DENT TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Charleston 5th Decr 1812.

Sir

Considering the Navy Yard as rented, and not purchased. I have not made any improvement of moment altho' much wanted to render it Capable of receiving and docking a vessel of war. there are several houses much wanted to accommodate the Crews and artificers; if authorized I could immediately have such built. the old wharf is intirely gone and requires a new one, the foundation is good and can be put in complete order for heaving out or building Ships, for the Sum of Two thousand dollars-it is daily washing away and requires immediate attention. I Have the Honor [&c.]

J H Dent

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 208. Endorsed at foot of letter: "Make such repairs and improvements as are really needed avoiding unnecesary expense. P.H." The wording of this endorsement is the same as that of Hamilton's formal reply, 18 Dec. 1812, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 5, p. 219.

The Need for Winter Clothing

By mid-November, the lack of sufficiently warm clothing began to have an effect on sailors at the New York Navy Yard. The commandant, Charles Ludlow, shows his determination to look out for the needs of his men in the document that follows. Ludlow was one of the navy's abler officers, but he resigned from the service in March 1813 because he felt humiliated by the sudden promotion of Lieutenant Charles Morris over the heads of officers who, like Ludlow, were masters commandant.[1] *Ludlow had two brothers in the navy: Augustus, who was first lieutenant on board* Chesapeake *when he died in the battle with H.M.S.* Shannon *on 1 June 1813; and Robert, who was purser on board* Constitution *at the time of her engagement with H.M.S.* Java *on 29 December 1812.*

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[1] *See Ludlow to Jones, 7 Apr. 1813, DNA, RG45, BC, 1813, Vol. 1, No. 125, and its enclosure, the duplicate of an earlier letter, Ludlow to Jones, 17 Mar. 1813, DNA, RC45, BC, 1813, Vol. 1, No. 124.*

MASTER COMMANDANT CHARLES LUDLOW TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

U.S. Navy Yard New York
November 18th 1812

Sir

The frequent applications from the Men belonging to this station for bedding cloaths &c in this inclement season, & being witness to some of their distresses (some entirely destitute of thick cloathing) have been induced, deeming it for the good of the Service to order the Purser to supply those that are much in want (even if they are in debt to the U States) with one Mattress, two blankets, 1 pr of shoes & stockings and a suit of thick Cloaths. The heedlessness of the Sailor while on Shore, & their receiving three months advance has been the cause of their present distress, to prevent its continuation, induces me to Solicit the honor of an answer, whether my proceedings meets your approbation or not. I have the honor [&c.]

Ch^{s} Ludlow

ALS, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 172.

Hospitalization of Gunboat Seamen

During the warm months, gunboats from Philadelphia were based at Newcastle to facilitate the cruising of Delaware Bay. Likewise, Captain David Porter used Newcastle as a home port for his frigate Essex. *But when he departed for his cruise to the South Atlantic and Pacific he left behind men whose poor health would not allow their absence from good medical care. Surgeon Edward Cutbush normally looked after the health needs of the Delaware Bay gunboat flotilla, but he also had responsibility for other naval personnel in the area. Thus, his concern was aroused when, with the onset of cold weather, it became evident that sick and hurt seamen could not be allowed to remain outside of Philadelphia. In the letter which follows, Dr. Cutbush suggests the removal of his medical care facilities to that city.*

Surgeon Edward Cutbush to Secretary of the Navy Hamilton

Sir,

Nine invalids were sent to the Hospital under my direction at New Castle from the frigate *Essex*; Capt Porter observed in his letter of the 20th ult. that "neither of the men will ever be suitable for the service, and did time and circumstances admit, he should discharge them." On the arrival of the men, I wrote to the Purser of the *Essex* for a statement of their accounts but have never received it, presuming that some information may be obtained from the returns made to the Department, respecting their wages, I beg leave to ask your order on this head; as the weather is becoming cold, they will probably stand in need of clothing, which I am not authorized to furnish. Several of the men, I presume, would be glad to return to their families could they be paid off. As the Gun Boats are laid up, and no probability of any of our ships of war coming into the Delaware during the winter season, I am instructed by Commodore [Alexander] Murray to ask your opinion, whether the Hospital shall be continued at New Castle for these nine men? The Commodore thinks it would be better to remove them to the Navy Yard at Philadelphia, if they are not discharged from the service. Should you approve of the Commodores plan I will discharge Dr McLane at New Castle. That it may not be supposed at the Department that I have had two mates on this station, I beg leave to state, that Dr P. [Peter] C. Whittelsey who was ordered here on the 15th of August last, did not report himself 'til this morning!! he is a youth of about 18 years of age what his acquirements are I know not, but conceive from his age that he is not capable of acting in any situation alone. I have now no duty for him to perform here, unless Dr [William P. C.] Barton should be ordered where surgeons are wanted. I have, however requested him to remain in Philada until I receive your order. I have the honor [&c.]

E Cutbush
Philada Novr 16. 1812.

List of men sent from the United States Frigate *Essex* Commanded by Capt Porter on the 21st of October 1812.

1. Charles Smith-Fistula in Perineo [*Perineum*]
2. John Smith-Diseased Testicle

3. Wm Hubble-Scrophula
4. James Wallace-ditto-
5. John Francis 2nd An old syphilitic Case.
6. Peter Johnson-Rupture
7. -[Robert] Stanwood-Stricture in the Urethra
8. -[Charles] Frederic-Scrophulous Abscess
9. John Anderson An old syphilitic case.

Peter Johnson says he was ruptured in the time of his duty at New York, therefore conceives that he is entitled to a Pension-

ALS, DNA, RG45, MLR, 1812, Vol. 7, No. 65.

Frigate *New York* in Disrepair

Although she had once been a strong element of the Mediterranean squadron, the frigate New York *had been laid up in ordinary at the Washington Navy Yard since 1805. By 1812, her timbers and those of the frigate* Boston *were "so rotten as to be not worth repairing," in the words of one notable maritime historian.*[1] *Nevertheless, it seems that the navy was considering the rebuilding of* New York. *The following document contains a proposal forwarded to the Navy Department from a Baltimore builder who wanted such a contract.*

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[1] *Chapelle,* American Sailing Navy, *p. 244.*

Master Commandant Charles Gordon to Secretary of the Navy Hamilton

Baltimore 17th Novr 1812

Sir,

The Agent & myself are about to conclude our arrangements with the Master builder at this place for the rebuilding of the Frigate *New York*. He has proposed to us, his terms by the Ton, also his terms by the days work, that is for him to superintend & the U.S. to pay the bills. The former (That is by the Ton) we conceive to be most to the interest of the U.S. As the days work in the latter would enable the workmen to nurse the job & keep the Ship on hand as long as possible besides, the builder no doubt would procure the timber much lower on his own account, than he would for the U.S. He however has made another very fair offer which I conceive the best. That is he will compleat the *New York* for the same price & as well as such a Ship can be compleated in any port South of the City of New York. Now Sir, as Mr [Thomas] Turner the acctt can no doubt in a few minutes favor us with a copy of the cost of the Frigates *United States*, *Philadelphia*, *Chesapeake* & *John Adams*, it would enable us to make such an agreement as would prevent extravagance which was so much complain'd of in the price of the *Constellation* when first built. If Mr Turner will inform us of the price pr Ton of any of the Ships built by the Ton it will enable us to fix upon the very lowest price possible. For I assure you the builder is extremely anxious that she should be the first at Sea, the fastest ship & promises that if she is not as well built as any ship in service he will forfeit the whole. All this added to the cheaper is all we can wish. He has a stern, stem & keel already engaged in case the old ones should prove rotten, & all fells point have come forward to try Baltimore against any other Ship commenc'd at the same time. Our only object now is to know from Mr Turner the lowest price, that any of our ships have or can be built for in any port South of New York either by the Ton or otherways. The U.S. to furnish all the Copper, all the joiners work, the wharf & the ware houses. The builder to furnish all the timber, spars, & workmen.

As this no doubt will make a considerable difference in the cost of the ship, & prevent imposition, I have conceived it my duty to call on Mr T for such information as he may have in his office. I have been thus particular in stating it to you in order that you may urge (to Mr Turner) the necessity [of] my getting such information [as soon] as possible, so that I may be [able] to compleat the agreement immediately & report to the Secretary.

I also write Mr Turner in which I shall enclose this. very respectfully &c

Cha^{s} Gordon

ALS, DNA, RG45, MC, 1812, Vol. 1, No. 114.

Southampton and *Vixen*

This pair of star-crossed ships met in battle, and the British frigate won. Only five days later, however, both capturer and prize were lost on a reef. The British lost a venerable frigate which had been in service since the Seven Years War. The United States lost not only a fine brig, but her captain as well.

Captain James L. Yeo, R.N., to Vice Admiral Charles Stirling, R.N.

His Majes: Ship *Southampton*[1]
At Sea, 22d Novr 1812.

Sir,

His Majesty's Ship under my command this day Captured the United States Brig *Vixen* Capt [Master Commandant] George Reed,[2] mounting twelve 18 Pr Carronades, two long nines, and One hundred and thirty men. She had been out five weeks, and I am happy to say had not made any Capture. I have &c.

(Signed) James Lucas Yeo. Captain

Charles Stirling Esqr
Vice Admiral of the White
&c. &c. &c.

Copy, UkLPR, Adm. 1/503, Part 1, p. 117.

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[1] *Southampton*, 32 guns, was built in 1757. J. J. Colledge, *Ships of the Royal Navy: An Historical Index*, 2 vols., (New York, 1969-1970), I: 515, called her "the first true frigate in the RN."

[2] Reed died in captivity in Spanish Town, Jamaica, on 8 Jan. 1813.

CAPTAIN JAMES L. YEO, R.N., TO VICE ADMIRAL CHARLES STIRLING, R.N.

His Majesty's Ship *Rhodian*[1]
Off the Mole, 11th Decr 1812.

Sir,

It is my most painful duty to announce to you, the loss of His Majesty's late Ship *Southampton*, on a reef of sunken rocks Off the desolate Islands of Conception, on the night of the 27th of Novr.

I am proceeding with the Crew to join your Flag (in the *Rhodian*, a Schooner & Cutter) with all possible dispatch, but as the *Rolla*[2] Schooner sails very fast, I have ordered Lieut: [William] Rawlins to make the best of his way to Port Royal. I have &c.

(Signed) James Lucas Yeo. Captain

Charles Stirling Esqr
Vice Admiral of the White
&c. &c. &c.

Copy, UkLPR, Adm. 1/503, Part 1, p. 119. Warren to Croker, 2 Jan. 1813, enclosed the above letters regarding *Southampton* and *Vixen*. A detailed account of the *Vixen*'s capture and the grounding of both *Southampton* and *Vixen* will be found in Lieutenant Glen Drayton's letter to the secretary of the navy of 8 Feb. 1813, DNA, RG45, BC, 1813, Vol. 1, No. 46.

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[1] *Rhodian*, 10 guns, was a brig-sloop of the *Cherokee* class.

[2] *Rolla*, 10 guns, was originally a brig-sloop of the *Cherokee* class, later rerigged as a schooner.

A Naval Presence at Savannah

That there was a small U.S. naval force, made up largely of barges, on duty at Savannah, Georgia, is one of the least known facts of the War of 1812. The men who served there have remained virtually anonymous and their deeds may have been ignored by all but avid local historians, but documentation in the National Archives yields clues to what took place. The officer in command of navy barges at Savannah was Lieutenant Charles F. Grandison. During the month of November 1812, he reported directly to the Navy Department. It is clear from his detailed and frequent letters that he felt isolated and was *often uncertain where to turn for support. But he was conscientious and tried to keep the secretary of the navy informed of his actions, despite little response from Washington. Anxious about the boldness of the British, who were cruising the coast and frequently raiding up local rivers, Grandison at one point exceeded his authority. He purchased an armed ship for the navy which had formerly served as a British packet and had been captured by Joshua Barney's* Rossie *earlier in the year. While this step may have pleased Savannah's merchants, it gained only grudging approval from Secretary Hamilton. The following letters reveal the naval war from the perspective of the Georgia seacoast.*

LIEUTENANT CHARLES F. GRANDISON TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Savannah 7th Novbr 1812

Sir

I have the Honour to inform you that I arrived here on the 5th Inst at night, and found one of the Barges here. She had lost six of her men by desertion. The officer Commanding her informd me that the Barges have lost 13 of their Men by desertion-that they had also lost 2 Anchors and 2 Cables, and have expended all the Powder I left with them (5 Barrels) I fear there has been great remisness in the officers Conduct who was left in Command by Captn [Master Commandant George W.] Reed all this I shall be able to assertain on my arrival at Sunbury and punish accordingly. There is now laying in this Port a very fine Schooner privateer Calld the *Matilda* Built at Baltimore in 1809 - 6 ms under the imediate inspection of Captn George Stiles-she is 221 Tons & Coppered to the Bends with heavy Copper.[1] She sails uncommonly fast, and is well Calculated for the Service-She has a profusion of stores of every kind requisite for a vessel of War-and may be perfectly equipt for the Service at a very trifling expence

She has 2 Suits of good Sails
2 good Cables
3 Anchors
1 Hawser
2 Sets New Rigging

2 Tons Cannon powder
5000 Musket & Pistol Cartridges
80 Water Casks 100 Gals each

11 Carriage Guns
80 Muskets
20 Pistols
60 Cutlasses
20 Boarding Pikes
36 Batle Axes
50 Bbls Salt Provision
35 Bbls Bread, and
25 Tons of Shot

The other Articles are too numerous to mention in a Letter. This Vessel may be purchased as she now lays for 30,000 Dollars-which in my oppinion is very reasonable-had we this Vessel we might man her imediatly, as Seamen are very Numerous here at present. She would be an exellent Vessel to guard the entrance of this River-and occationaley run out as petty depredators may appear-and being a good vessel to recieve such men as may enter for the Service. I could always draw men from her for the Barges, as the seamen will not enter for the Barges under any circumstances-the above Vessel I have carefully examind in Company with the Collector & others, all of whom are of oppinion that she would be a Valuable acquisition to to the force in this section of the Union, particularly at this moment, as there is now, and has been for a Number of days, a British Cutter Privateer, Mounting But 8 Guns and mand Chiefly with Blacks about 70 in Number, Cruizing between Savannah and Charleston-and has already done a great deal of mischief.

The following is a Copy of a letter which was given to the Collector this morning by the owner of a Vessel which was Captured by her last tuesday on her way to Charleston.

Cutter *Caledonia* at Sea

Sir

The Persons named in the Margin being Citezens of the U.S. and taken by the Private Cutter of War *Caledonia*, in the Sloop *William* from Savannah to Charleston and by me liberated. I hope you will have the goodness to send by the first oppertunity as many subjects of great Britain, Prisoners of War in their Stead, the said persons being liberated by me on this Patrole of Honor, and you will oblige Dear Sir Yours

Richd Corelson
Commander

directed
to the Commissioners for
the Department of War
United States

The following are the names of the persons thus liberated. Willm Wilkie, Robt Frazier, Thos Lindsay, Robt Webber, and Anty Gurney I have the Honor to be [&c.]

C. F. Grandison

[P.S.] The *Southampton* frigate is actually off Beaufort, She boarded a Ship Just arrived and impress'd one Seaman from her Yesterday.
N.B. the Collector is this moment informd that the British Cutter is now actualey anchored inside the Light-House & we have nothing to go in pursuit of her. I have done all I could to raise Volunteers and take the *Matilda* down to her, but the men 200, in number will not proceed unless I command them. the Captn however is opposed to this, but has no objections to go himself, and the people will not go with him I think it possible that something may be done before night, as I have promised to repair whatever damage She may sustain, and replace such munitions of War as May be expended on this occation Respectfully Sir

C. F. Grandison

ALS, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 147.

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1. The same *Matilda* privateer, with 11 guns, which is discussed in Read to Hamilton, 13 July 1812. See pp. 191-92.

LIEUTENANT CHARLES F. GRANDISON TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Savannah 17th Nov: 1812

Sir,

I hasten to inform you that it was officially reported to me by Major [Lawrence] Manning the Comander of the Land forces on this station, that the Boats of the blockading Squadron off this Bar, had actually sent their Boats in, man'd with 150 men; and had sounded as high as a place call'd 7 fathom-about 5 miles below Fort Jackson. That they had taken a Major Pope, who was gunning on the River, & had detain'd him 9 hours in their possession. Yesterday in the evening the alarm was

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so great, that the alarm Bell was rang, and the Militia were under arms during the night-the British having threatned to burn all the Shipping at the Wharves. The two Barges which were here I ordered down the River to co-operate with the Fort-the Barges with the assistance of the Privateers, I thought would be a sufficient force to impel the invaders.

The commanders of the Privateers-*Matilda-United we Stand*, and *Divided we fall* are entitled to the thanks of their country for their promptitude in volunteering their services for the defence of the Ci and Shipping. As their vessels could not go down (owing to wind & Tide) they went down in their Boats, and kept guard below the Forts during the night. However the Enemy did not apper. This morning the report of their having been in the River was corroborated by the the arrival of a Brig, which was boarded by the Boats from the *Southampton* a little distance from the Fort. As the Gun-boats are not yet arrived, and as there is a necessity to keep the Barges in the Inlets (as the inhabitants of the Sea Islands and about those waters are very clamorous for the aid of the Naval forces here) I have at the earnest solicitation of the Citizens of this state purchased a vessel for Eight thousand Dollars, for a guard Ship in this River. I was the more inclined to make this purchase, as she had her Guns and amunition on board, and will be ready for sea in a few days. From those inducements, and my anxious desire to protect the Coast I have the honor to Command, I hope this purchase will meet your approbation.

The want of officers on this station has induced me to detain Midsm [Samuel] Le Compte, who lately arrived here on his way to St. Marys'. Officers are very much wanted on this station. Inclosed is the Inventory of the vessel I have purchased. Be pleased to observe, that the Ordnance and pig Iron Ballast, is worth the sum paid for the whole. Should peace take place this vessel will always sell for a much greater price than what has been now paid for her. I also take the liberty to enclose the Memorial of the Most respectable residents in this City.[1]

The cold and inclement season fast approaching renders it absolutely necessary that the men which compose the crew of the Barges, should have a vessel of some kind to sleep on board of, or, I very much fear we shall loose the whole of them, either by Death, or desertion. All these considerations, taken in a clear view, I feel convinced will justify the steps which I have taken for the public good in the Eyes of my

Country & the Honble the Secretary of the Navy. I have the honor [&c.]

C. F. Grandison

P.S. In the memorial of the Citizens of Savannah, I have only selected those of the first distinction, as it would require a volume to send the names of all the Citizens of Savannah.

Inventory of the Ship *Princess Amelia*

The *Princess Amelia* is a prize to the American privateer the *Rosie* [*Rossie*] of Baltimore, She was a British Packet mounting 8 Guns. She is about 5 years old and her burthen 180 Tons. Her Hull is sound and strongly built & she is newly copperrd. Her Masts and Spars (of which she has a full set) are good, and require no expense, except some of her yards which have shot holes in them. Her sails are very good, only pierced with shot.

Of Rigging-Takle-&c-&c-&c. She has the following
One fore, & Main Top Sail half worn-Three Top Gallant Sails-half worn-Two Royals half worn-One Foresail, nearly new-One Main Sail half worn-One Spanker & mizen half worn-Two Mizen Stay Sails & one Top Mast Staysail, half worn-One Jibb & Flying Jibb, half worn-One fore Staysail, half worn, One Gaft Top Sail, half worn-One Main, Main Top mast & Middle Staysail, half worn-One Main Top Gallt Staysail, half worn-Three top mast Studg Sails, half worn-Two top Gallt, Studg Sails, 1/2 worn-One fore, Main & Mizen top Sail, Indifferent-One fore sail, Indifferent-2 Top Gallt Sails, Indift-two Stay sails, Indifferent-One Awning, very good-One 14 1/2 in Cable, best Bower, very good-One 13 in Cable, Small Bower, very good-One 9 1/2 in Cable, Stream, very good-One hawser, Indifferent-Two Bower Anchors-One Stream Anchor-One Kedge Anchor-running rigging complete, very good-Standing Rigging complete, much cut, but being good will answer Spliced-Lower Masts very good but pierced wt. Small Shot-Top Masts & Top Gallant Masts, slightly cut-The rest of the Spars in good order.
Ordnance.

Eight 9 wt Carronades, with spunges, rammers, worms, &c complete.

Shot-Round, grape & cannister-Fourteen Boarding Pikes-Six Cutlasses-Powder horns-Cartridge boxes and every other utensel-Three Keggs Gun powder, & one bundle unfill'd Cartridges-26 fine Water Casks-one box Signal Lights-Two Binnacle compasses, & other articles-70 Tons Pig Iron, as Ballast-a Long Boat & Cutter-Cabouse-& 3 Signal Lanterns.

LS, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 169.

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1. See following document.

Citizens of Savannah to Lieutenant Charles F. Grandison

M-E-M-O-R-I-A-L.-

To Charles F. Grandison Esquire
Lieut: commanding the U.S. Naval forces on the Sunbury Station.
The Memorial of the undersigned Citizens of Savannah,

Respectfully Represent-

That the port & harbor of the City of Savannah is evidently destitute of every kind of Naval protection, at a period when we have every reason to apprehend the enemy to visit our Sea board, & particularly the entrance of the River leading to the metropolis of this State- That understanding a Ship called the *Princess Amelia* is for sale and would not only answer the purpose of a Guard Ship, but is well calculated for Sailing and would answer the purpose of going over the Bar occasionally, and defending the neighbouring Sea coast from Privateers and Picaroons- That your Mem. relying on your judgement and discretion, would beg leave to request the favor of you Sir, to examine the said Ship called the *Princess Amelia*, or any other in the Port, and should you be of opinion that she, or any other will answer the purpose for which she is wanted, you would exercise all the discretionary power you possess from Government to purchase her, or any other, from the owners, for and on acct of your Government. —

W. Stephens
A. S. Bulloch
Matt: McAllister
[T.] Bourke
Jno Bolton

Hampdin McIntosh
Alexr. Telfair
Thos. F. Williams
J. Bond Read
Jno Cumming

Nicholas Long	Richd. M. Stiles
Chas. Harris	Thos Mendenhall
	Robt. Mackay.-

Copy, DNA, RG45, MLR, Vol. 6, No. 208.

LIEUTENANT CHARLES F. GRANDISON TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Savannah 19th Novr 1812

Sir,

The enclosed is a memorial which was this day handed to me by a delegation from a meeting which was held in this City by the principal proprietors of Estates on the Sea Islands between the Savannah River and the Skidaway Island.

I am afraid Sir I shall offend you by so many communications from this Station. I am very anxous to provide for the defence of those Islands and to gratify the Citizens of Georgia: But on the other hand, I am afraid of committing myself in the eyes of the Department. As there is no force as yet on this station, and as my instructions do not extend to purchase, or hire, I know not how to act to give general satisfaction. I can, and have sent the Barges: But these Boats will kill all our men as the weather is so inclement. Decked Vessels should be with them to protect the men.

I should be very happy to have power to station (either by hire, or purchase) such small vessels for Harbor defence as the exposed situation of this State requires.

The *Princess Amelia* (now the *Georgia*) will soon be ready for service. She will be a Brig of 14 Guns.

I have appointed Lieutenant N. [Noah] Allen her first Lieutenant pro: tem:[1] I know not how this officer stands with the Department: But as he says he has accepted his commission, and is here commanding a Privateer, I thought it my duty to give him these orders, presuming no officer can be allowed furlow to command a privateer when their services are required for the public Vessels.

I have opened a Rendezvous for Manning the Brig. Waiting the honor of a reply I have the honor [&c.]

C F Grandison

LS, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 174.

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1. Noah Allen does not appear in any *Navy Registers*. Allen left Savannah for Washington in Dec. 1812, having read a newspaper account of the protest lodged against him by the crew of the privateer *Matilda*. See Read to Hamilton, 13 July 1812, pp. 191-92, and Grandison to Hamilton, 12 Dec. 1812, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 215.

[Enclosure]

To Lieutenant Grandison, Commanding the Barges of the United States on the Georgia Station.

The Memorial of the Undersigned, Proprietors and Planters of the Islands of Wilmington, Skidaway, Whitemarsh &c.

Respectfully Represents,

That your memorialists and others, proprietors of Estates, between Savannah River and the South end of Skidaway Island, feel themselves greatly alarmed at their exposure to the Privateers, Picaroons & marauding parties of the Enemy.

Your Memorialists would venture to affirm, that there are not two points on the Sea,-Board of the State of more real importance to be guarded & protected than the entrance of Warsaw river, which passes between Wilmington & Skidaway Islands and leads directly up to Thunderbolt & from thence four miles to Savannah; & that other point which passes by the south end of Skidaway up Vernon River to Montgomery, ten miles from Savannah. These two important passes being left altogether unprotected by Government, furnishes the Enemy with an easy & ready passage for vessels of almost any burthen, in a single tide to pass up and land either at Thunderbolt or Montgomery and be in Savannah in two or three hours. Besides Sir, the Enemy by landing either at Wilmington or Skidaway would have under their countroul in the course of a few hours upwards of One Thousand slaves and a vast quantity of provisions & other property.

Your Memorialists would further beg leave to state, that they understand, the Gun Boats and Barges when ordered to cruise, seldom come as far as Warsaw River, in consequence of the Intricacy of the route through, Rumney Marsh, their passage requiring high tides and fair winds.

A Gun Boat stationed at the South end of Wilmington and a barge at the South end of Skidaway would afford great protection, to all the

Islands between Savannah & Great Ogeechee. A Barge would with any tide that would allow an enemy to run up to Montgomery through Rumney Marsh be able to pass through Rumney Marsh and give notice to the Gun-boat in Warsaw River. Warsaw Bar is but a few miles below Wilmington & Skidaway Islands and which can be passed by vessels drawing sixteen feet water. These Islands were visited during the last war and all are in hourly apprehension of being visited by the same enemy again.

Your Memorialists, therefore do most earnestly request that you will exercise all the discretionary powers you possess, to let us have a Barge & Gun-boat as early as possible; The former to be stationed at the south end of Skidaway, & the Gunboat in Warsaw River which will furnish not only security to the Islands but which is of still greater importance, additional security to the City of Savannah.

Proprietors of Estates on the
Islands within mentioned

Math. McAllister
Charles Harris
Geo. Jones
W Jones
Robert S Gibson
Lewis Turner
Richd Turner
Warren Percival
Mat. W. Stewart
John W. Barnard
Timoy Barnard Jr
John Barnard
Edmd Jarvis
S. Shad
George Herb
Gardner Tufts attny
for Ebn Jackson
N. Turnbull

We recommend an early
attention to the prayer of
the memorialists

W. B. Bulloch
J: Lawson
John Bolton
W Stephens
[T] Bourke
A. S. Bulloch
H. M. Intosh
Barack Gibbons
Jno Cumming

I Minis
J Y Noel
Bryan Morel (North ossabaw-

DS, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 174.

LIEUTENANT CHARLES F. GRANDISON TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Savannah 25 Nov: 1812

Sir,

I have the honor to inclose herewith the result of an enquiry made on the conduct of Midshipman Hemersley [*Hamersley*], as regards the man he wounded on Board Barge *No 1*, and who is since dead.[1] It appears from all the evidence that Brown (the deceas'd) was guilty of Mutiny in the extreme and that he met his death in an attempt to destroy Mr Hemersley.

The witnesses in favor of Midsn Hemersley are as follows-

Mr P.A. Bush-Sailing master
Mr Thos. Legare-Actg Sailg master
Mr Thos. Allisone [*Allison*]-Midshipman
John Esbrone-Seamn
Henry Barton-Seamn
Henry Newman-Seamn
James Hill-Seaman

And but one Seaman, Sanders, in favor of the deceas'd, and this man deposath that the deceas'd was drunk and nothing farther. From these circumstances I am induced to believe that Midsn Hemersley only acted in self defence. I have the honor to be [&c.]

Cha^{s} F. Grandison

LS, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 198.

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[1] Upon arriving at the Sunbury station on 8 Nov., Grandison found appalling conditions: ammunition nearly exhausted, arms unfit for use, anchors, cables, and sweeps lost and broken, men deathly ill from exposure, one officer and three men dead, thirteen men having deserted, and the remainder in a state of indiscipline. Grandison attributed these conditions to the cruelty and intemperance of the officers in charge. He reported that one man, then dying, had been "most inhum[ane]ly stabd" by Hamersley. See Grandison to Hamilton, 9 Nov. 1812, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 149.

[Enclosure]
Capt: Grandison,

14th Nov: 1812
Sava Georgia

Sir,

As I was walking down on the Bluff I heard a noise on board of *No 1* Mr [Lachlan] Cuthbert was then going off–he asked me if I would not accompany him, I answered yes–when we came alongside of her, Mr Cuthbert and myself address'd them and ask'd them if they were not asham'd of themselves making such a Riot they still in it. We then demanded them to keep silence which they pay'd no attention to our orders–in a few minutes after, this fellow Brown came aft and asked me if I thought any thing of what he had said to me a few evenings before? I answered him I did not–in reaching his hand dropt a long Spanish Knife drawn. I immediately arose and ask'd him what he meant to do with it, his reply was, he did not know. I then mentioned to Mr Cuthbert to make himself contented until I returned. I then went on board of *No 4*, the Boat which I commanded and got my side arms and ordered my men to get in the Boat and I went alongside of *No 1*–in stepping on board this fellow Sanders ask'd me what I meant to do with the Sword. I then struck him over the shoulders with the Scabbord twice or three times–then immediately this man Brown rush'd from aft and swore that before his ship-mate should be struck by a dam'd white liver'd Son of a Bitch he would suffer death. My Mate and several of the men seized him to prevent him from gaining me. I was then standing forward–he still made use of mutinous and insulting words and making every exertion to gain me–he caught Mr Cuthbert by the back of the neck and threw him down. After that I was convinced his determination was to destroy me in which I made two passes at him with my Sword, not for the intention of destroying him or giving him any mortal wound.

Signd: George Hamersley

Copy, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 198.

[Enclosure]

This is to certify that Brown who was wounded by Midsn Hemersley was not drunk when that circumstance happened, but was in all respects qualified for duty.

Signd by Jno Bush Sailing Master
Thos Legare Acting Sailing Master
and Thos Allisone Midshipman
Jno Miller
Heny Barton Seamen
Heny Newman
and James Hill

Copy, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 181.

LIEUTENANT CHARLES F. GRANDISON TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Sunbury 2 decr 1812

Sir

I have the honour to inform you, that in consequence of the enormous expence attending the Hospital establishment on this Station. I have sent all the sick round to savannah there to be sent to the Marine Hospital-where they will meet with better attendance-and at a much less expence-than at Sunbury. on my Arrival here, yesterday, I was informed that Doctor [James] Troup has been appointed to this station, as Surgeon, that he had been here, and had returnd again, not liking to accept the situation, as it would Interfere too much with his profession at Darien. Doctor [Samuel J.] Axsam who has attended the sick heretofore and whose Bill is so great, tells me that he will accept the Appointment of Surgeon on this station if you will accept of his Services-but as I have removed the sick to Savannah I do not think there is any occation for one now, except in the event of Attack. In breaking up the Hospital Establishment at Sunbury I have reduced the Monthly expence-at least two hundd Dollars. it will now remain at six Dollars pr month for storage untill I get a Vessel to recieve the stores. Since I last had the honour of writeing to you seven Men have deserted from the Barges-but none indebted to the dept. It appears allmost imposible to keep them on board their Boats for they desert in spight of all the Vigilence of the officers, nothing but keeping them at a distance from the Shore on a deckd Vessel will prevent ther constant desertion.

My Next Communication will inform you Sir of all the expences which has attended the Barges on this Station since their first Arrival up to the close of the Present Year-with the statement of the Peoples accounts-the Number of desertions-and the Number of deaths. Another Bill for Medical attendance since the 9th of November is this Moment handed to me amounting to $86.50. In consequence of which I have suspended the doctors Attendance in, toto, and have taken away the Medicine Chest which Captn Reed Lent him.[1] I have the Honour [&c.]

Chas F. Grandison

ALS, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 198.

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[1] Master Commandant George W. Reed commanded the barges at Sunbury for two months before being ordered to command *Vixen* in Sept. 1812, following the death of her commander, Master Commandant Christopher Gadsden.

CONGRESSMAN GEORGE M. TROUP TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Washington
30th Nov 1812

Dear Sir

I enclose the letter, Memorial, & Exhibit,[1] the subject of which is the purchase of the *Princess Amelia* for Harbor defence. There being no prospect of the gun boats (which you were so good as to promise) being able to reach Savannah, having no means of defence on the water, & the enemy having actually invaded them The Citizens of Savannah of the greatest respectability united in urging Lieut Grandison to purchase the *Princess Amelia* which you will see by the Exhibit has been purchased for a sum considerably below her value. As Lieut Grandison acted in this affair without express authority from you he anxiously awaits your decision on his conduct. The Memorial has the signature of the District Judge the Collector & all the public agents at Savannah.

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This vessel will under the direction of Grandison I trust keep the People of Savannah in tolerable humor until you have a favorable opportunity to furnish a few gun boats. With high respect & consideration

Geo M Troup[2]

ALS, DNA, RG45, MLR, 1812, Vol. 7, No. 135.

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1. Enclosures not filed with document. In addition to the letter printed on pp. 598-600 above, they probably consist of copies of the memorial from the citizens of Savannah and the "Inventory of the Ship *Princess Amelia*," pp. 600-602.

2. George Michael Troup was a member of the House of Representatives from Georgia, 1807-1815. He later served as a U.S. senator and as governor of Georgia.

LIEUTENANT CHARLES F. GRANDISON TO CONGRESSMAN GEORGE M. TROUP

Savannah 18th Nov: 1812

My dear friend,

I wrote my letter to you last evening in such haste (owing to the closing of the Mail) that I had not time to examine it, consequently omitted to "Enclose the Memorial" therein mentioned: But tho' it's never too late to correct our errors, still they cannot be removed too soon-the longer their existance, the greater their attendant evils-therefore I took no time in sending the memorial in full chase after my letter, or, rather a copy of it-the Original being sent to the Honble: the Secretary of the Navy as I should have told you before. Here my dear Sir, let me reiterate my request of you to wait on the Secretary and be my advocate in in the purchase of the *Princess Amelia*. Herewith you will receive a copy of her Inventory, Examine it, and say if she is not a bargain. Her Ordnance & Ballast is worth, nay, would this day fetch as much as I have given for her and all her appendages.

You may say, perhaps, that I am over zealous in behalf of the portion of our Coast assigned to my protection. I certainly feel as much interested for its safety as tho' it belonged to me, and I feel as much desire to catch a party of English on it, as ever one of its inhabitants [does] to catch a gang of run-away Negros. Accept the assurance of my most respectful consideration.

C. F. Grandison

Cong George M. Troup Member of Congress

LS, DNA, RG45, MLR, 1812, Vol. 7, No. 74.

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON TO LIEUTENANT CHARLES F. GRANDISON

Nav: Dep'mt
3 December 1812

Your several letters have been received.

The purchase of the *Princess Amelia* is not disapproved: tho there exists no authority to make such a purchase.

You will communicate Your proceedings to Comre Campbell, undere whose order You are to act: Change her name, & call her the *Troup*

P. Hamilton

Copy, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 10, p. 214.

LIEUTENANT CHARLES F. GRANDISON TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

U.S. Sloop *Troup*
Savannah 20th dec: 1812

Sir,

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your esteem'd favor of the 3rd inst: this day, the contents of which shall be punctually attended to. The *Troup* is nearly ready for Service, and ere you receive this she will be quite so, except having her crew. Most of the men now on board belong to the Barges–also the Officers. I dispatched two Barges to St Marys three weeks since for Men–they have not yet returned. The *Troup* will mount 20 guns namely, 16–9 lbers, 2–12 lbers, & 2–18 lbers, Carronades, and as amunition is scarce here I wish to take her to St Mary's for the purpose of getting a sufficiency from Commodore Campbell. We have no Signal Book on this station neither have we the private Signal, nor the Privateers private Signal. May I solicit those Signals. Agreeable to your instructions I shall in future communicate my proceedings to Commodore Campbell. I am sorry to inform you that all the Officers, with the exception of one, and all the

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men have been very ill, myself included. Ten are in the Hospital here, the rest are on board and on the recovery. I have the honor to be [&c.]

Cha^{s} F Grandison

LS, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 228.

Men for the Frigate *Adams*

Charles Morris's promotion to captain gave him priority in gaining a command at sea. He was ordered to Adams, *a small 28-gun frigate which was undergoing a partial rebuilding at the Washington Navy Yard. To obtain seamen, Secretary Hamilton issued orders for the opening of a rendezvous. Morris and his ship were delayed more than a year in departing by the British blockade off the Virginia Capes. After breaking out in 1814, Morris made several captures, but was ultimately obliged to destroy* Adams *when threatened with capture in the Penobscot River. The document which follows contains the Navy Department's recruiting order on behalf of Morris.*

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON TO CAPTAIN JOHN CASSIN

Capt John Cassin
Navy Yard Gosport Va

Navy Depart
30 Novr 1812

Be pleased to order a Rendezvous to be opened at Norfolk to enter thirty able & thirty Ordinary Seamen, directing the recruiting officer to report from time to time his progress to Capt Morris at this place-the men being intended for the *Adams* under his command.

The wages to Able Seamen are 12$ pr month-and if absolutely necessary, a bounty of from 10 to 20$ may be given-to Ordinary Seamen & boys from 6 to 10$-and to all two months advance upon good Security being given, to indemnify the public in the event of desertion-to be entered to serve two years from the time the ship first weighs anchor for a cruize. Give the recruiting officer orders to enter none but white able bodied Citizens.

The Navy Agent will furnish the necessary monies upon the requisitions of the recruiting officer approved by you.

Blank shipping papers are herewith transmitted.

Paul Hamilton

Copy, DNA, RG45, CNA, Vol. 1, p. 346.

Commodore Tingey's Concerns

The correspondence of Thomas Tingey, commandant of the Washington Navy Yard, is rich in detail for the study of ship repair and the procurement of naval stores, timber, rope yarns, iron, and ordnance for the Washington yard and others along the east coast. Tingey's concerns during early December 1812, focused on three subjects: repairs and recruitment for the frigate Adams *at Washington Navy Yard, the possible rebuilding of the decaying frigate* New York, *and the disposition of naval gunboats at the various naval stations in Chesapeake Bay and southward. An offer had been made by a Baltimore builder for work on* New York *(see pp. 592–93) and preparations had been made to escort the ship to Baltimore with gunboats from the Chesapeake Bay flotilla based in that city. But a decision was reached not to proceed with the work. In the long run, this may have been the wisest choice.* New York *was so far gone that she would have required extensive work, and she probably would not have been able to break through the blockade even if completed.* Constellation *was ready for sea by late 1812, yet was unable to leave Chesapeake Bay until the end of the war. The documents which follow reflect activities at the Washington Navy Yard during the last month of 1812.*

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COMMODORE THOMAS TINGEY TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Navy Yard Washtn:
3d Decr 1812.

Sir

By a representation from the Master smith, it appears eligible, for expediting the repairs and armament of the frigate *Adams*, that we should have orderd from the Baltimore forge five tons of flat Iron 4 1/2 inches wide 7/8 inch thick-Three tons 3 1/2 in. wide 3/8 inch thick-Five tons flat bar 2 to 3 inches wide. Five tons 2 1/2 & 2 inch square. Five tons 1 1/2 inch square. Five do: 1 1/4 inch square. Six ton rounded bolt iron 1/2 inch to 1 inch diameter & fifty bundles spike rods.

Also the following assortment of thimbles viz'

Open thimbles	welded thimbles
4 gross 1 1/2 inch	5 gross 1 1/2 inch
9 do 2 do	10 do 2 do
5 do 2 1/2 do	5 do 2 1/4 do
5 do 2 3/4 do	5 do 2 1/2 do
5 do 3 do	

The Patent thimbles made in New York, are equally good, and can be had for half the price that we can make them. All which is respectfully submitted. I have the honor to be [&c.]

Tho^{s}: Tingey

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 204.

COMMODORE THOMAS TINGEY TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Navy Yard Washtn 3d Decr 1812

Sir

On an examination of the five Gun Boats, sent here by Captain [Master Commandant Charles] Gordon, (intended to take round the frigate *New York* to Baltimore) it appears that they are not in a state, fit to send outside the Capes, for a southern station. I therefore beg leave respectfully to recommend that they be ordered to return to Baltimore, or sent to the Norfolk station. I have the honor to be [&c.]

Tho^{s} Tingey

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 205. Endorsed at foot of letter: "*No. 135* Richd J Cox *136* Geo J Davis *139* Horace Smyth *142* Jno Nantz *143* Jas Lawreson Order them to Norfolk P.H."

Commodore Thomas Tingey to Secretary of the Navy Hamilton

Navy Yard Washtn 4d Decr 1812

Sir

I have received information from the Navy Agent at Boston, that, a number of men for the frigate *Adams*, have embarked in a sloop for this port. As we shall need a comfortable and safe place to lodge them, I will have the frigate *New York*, prepared for that purpose, should it meet your approbation. I have the honor to be [&c.]

Tho^{s}: Tingey

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 206.

Commodore Thomas Tingey to Secretary of the Navy Hamilton

Navy Yard Washtn 12th Decr 1812

Sir

I have the honor to inform you that, in consequence of the appearance of the weather, I yesterday directed Sailing Master William Fleetwood, commanding Gun Boat *No 144*, with *Nos 137, 140* & *141* under his direction, to proceed down near Alexandria and there wait until I should receive your Instructions, where to order them, for their winter station.

The Gun Boat *No 135*, sailing Master R. J. Cox, with four others attach'd to his command, are also here, and ready to proceed, wherever you shall be pleased to direct. Mr Cox, having on board the Signals, for

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the Baltimore Squadron of Boats, it may be most eligible that, he with the Boats attach'd to his command, be ordered back to Baltimore. And Fleetwood with the others, to the Norfolk Station.

All which is respectfully submitted for your instructions. I have the honor to be [&c.]

Tho^s: Tingey

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 212. Endorsed at foot of letter: "Let it be so ordered P.H."

The Return of *United States* and *Macedonian*

After defeating Macedonian *off the Azores Islands on 25 October, Captain Decatur's crew spent several days jury-rigging her, then commenced the long voyage back to the United States with the prize in company. During the first days of December, the two ships slipped through the blockade and entered coastal waters.* United States *sailed into Long Island Sound and made for New London, anchoring off that port on 4 December.* Macedonian, *however, was beset with fog and went into Newport two days later.* Macedonian*'s arrival raised great excitement since this was the first news local inhabitants received about Decatur's success. The* Newport Mercury *welcomed the news under the headline "ANOTHER BRILLIANT NAVAL VICTORY," remarking "with emotions of heartfelt pride and pleasure, we place before our readers another proof of the superior skill and bravery of our officers, seamen, and marines which will secure to them the unanimous applause of a grateful country."*[1]

Master Commandant Perry, commanding the Newport station, was immediately involved in taking care of the prize and her crew, among whom were a number of sick and wounded seamen. In the following two letters Decatur reports his safe arrival at New London, and Perry informs the secretary of his having rendered assistance to Macedonian*'s crew.*

[1] Newport Mercury, *12 Dec. 1812, p. 3.*

Commodore Stephen Decatur to Secretary of the Navy Hamilton

December 4th 1812. U.S.S. *United*
States at anchor off New London

Sir

I have to acquaint you with our arrival at New London this morning & beg leave to refer you to the enclosed[1] for the details of an action between this ship & His Britannic Majesty's ship *Macedonian*-The last night being very dark we unavoidably parted with our prize off Montaug [*Montauk*] point and the weather is still so thick that she cannot come into port. She has a pilot on board and is capable of standing any weather-the moment she can see her way I have no doubt she will be in.

'Tis with great pleasure I inform you that our wounded are all doing well-and have the honour to be [&c.]

[Stephen Decatur]

AL, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 207.

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[1] Probably refers to Decatur to Hamilton, 30 Oct. 1812, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 154. See pp. 552-53.

Master Commandant Oliver H. Perry to Secretary of the Navy Hamilton

Newport Decr 10th 1812

Sir,

A number of wounded having arrived in the *Macdonian* who it was absolutely necessary to land immediately I have in consequence, taken a few rooms as a temporary hospital for their accommodation, as well, as for the sick belonging to the GunBoats who cannot have the necessary conveniences onboard-and have placed it under the direction of Doctr [Edmond T.] Waring of this Town. I hope Sir, this arrangement will meet your approbation. I have the honor to be [&c.]

O. H. Perry

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ALS, DNA, RG45, MC, 1812, No. 123. Endorsed at foot of letter: "Entirely approved. Let them have every necessary comfort of every kind. P.H."

The Loss of His Majesty's Packet, *Princess Amelia*

Among the many prizes taken by American ships during the War of 1812 were a number of British packets, which were official vessels, though not a part of the Royal Navy establishment. They carried mail and specie from England to British possessions in North America and the West Indies, and to the British civil servants and citizens living in South America. One of the first packets to become a victim of the war was Princess Amelia, *carrying eight guns and 14 men, en route from St. Thomas to Falmouth. She had the misfortune to encounter Joshua Barney's* Rossie *during the second part of that ship's successful cruise. There was a long, hard-fought contest, during which the packet suffered the death of her captain and master and many other casualties.*

As has been seen in earlier documents, Princess Amelia *survived the engagement, was taken prize and sent into Savannah. She was eventually taken into the U.S. Navy as* Georgia, *but was renamed* Troup *in honor of Congressman George Troup from Georgia who had urged Secretary Hamilton to make the purchase.*[1] *The following documents consist of an official account of the capture of* Princess Amelia *and a request by postal officials that the officers and men of the ship be compensated for their injuries with "gratuities" for severe wounds and "smart money" for slight wounds. Pensions were alloted to the families of those who were killed.*

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1. See Troup to Hamilton, 30 Nov. 1812, pp. 608-609 and Hamilton to Grandison, 3 Dec. 1812, p. 610.

THE EARL OF SANDWICH AND THE EARL OF CHICHESTER TO THE LORDS COMMISSIONERS OF THE TREASURY

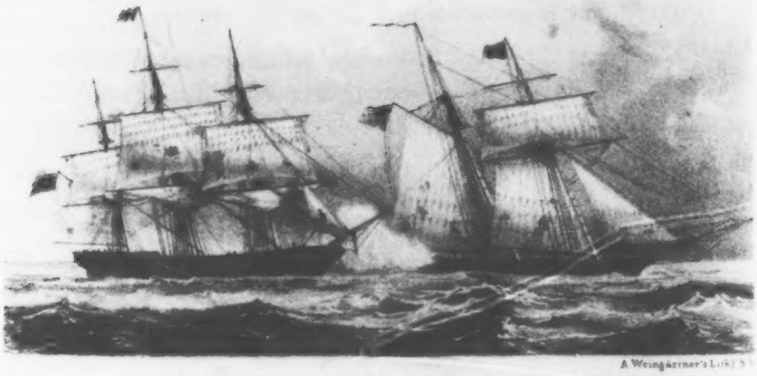
To the Right Honorable The Lords Commissioners
of His Majesty's Treasury–

My Lords

We deem it highly necessary to represent to your Ldps the Circumstances of a very gallant Action which occurred on 15th Septr last, in Defence of the *Princess Amelia* Pkt, agst an American Privateer of very superior Force; & though that Defence proved unsuccessful, we think it proper for the Sake of Example, & for the good of the Service, as well as on acct of the excellent Conduct of the Officers & Men, to propose such Pensions to the Widows & the Relatives of those who fell in the Action, & Rewards & Smart Money to the Remainder of the Crew, as have been usual in Cases of a like Nature.

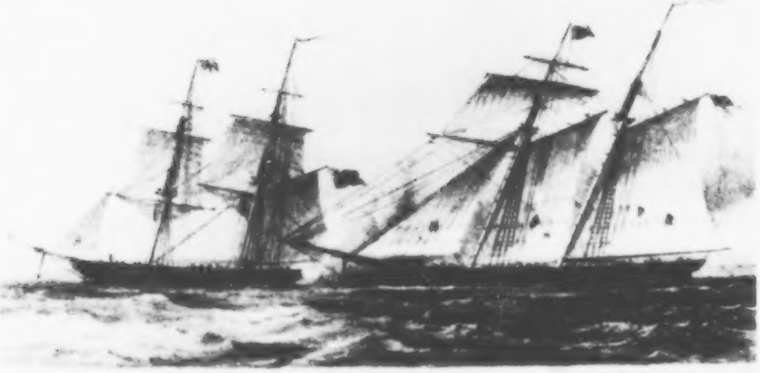
The *Pss Amelia*, armed with eight guns, & carrying 28 Men, Officers included, sailed from St Thomas' for Falmouth on 12th Sept last, & on the 15th of that Month she was attacked by the American Privateer *Rossie* of 12 guns & 95 men, agst which she was defended upwards of 50 Minutes, when the Captain, & the Master, & a Boy, having fallen, & the Mate & ten Seamen being wounded, & every further Effort to save the Vessel become unavailing, she was surrendered to the Enemy & the Mail & dispatches sunk.

Capt: Moorsom who has thus lost his Life in the Service, & Mr Nankeville the Master were truly worthy Men, & deserving Officers. They have both left Widows to lament their Fate, & the Master has besides left an aged Mother who entirely depended upon him for her support. We therefore submit that it may be right to allow Mrs Moorsom a Pension of £ 60 per Ann: during her Life or Widowhood; & a Pension of £ 20 per Ann: to the Widow of Mr Nankeville during her Life or Widowhood, with an additional allowance of £ 5 per ann during the Life of his Mother whom he supported. We also beg leave to propose a gratuity of £ 10 to the poor aged Mother of Richard May, the Boy, who was killed in the Action; & Smart Money to the Master, and wounded Seamen, with gratuities to the remainder of the Crew, as stated in the enclosed List, & we request your Lordships Authority to pay the same amounting for the Pensions to Mrs Moor-



A Weingärtner's Lith. N.Y.

BATTLE between the SCHOONER ROSSIE, and the SHIP PRINCESS AMELIA,
on the 16th of Sept. 1812.



[illegible]

som, & Mrs Nankeville & the Mother, to the Sum of £ 85 per ann: & for Smart Money & gratuities to £ 261.4- We are [&c.]

Sandwich [John Montagu, 5th Earl]
Chichester [Thomas Pelham, 2nd Earl]

General Post Office
Decr 1st 1812

Pensions, Smart Money, & Gratuities, proposed to the Officers & Crew of the *Prss Amelia* Packet & to the Relatives of those who fell in Action with the American Privateer *Rossie* of 12 guns & 95 Men-15th Sept. 1812.

	£	s	d
Killed. Pensions.			
Isaac Moorsom Esqr Commander-Pension per Ann: to his Widow during life or Widowhood	60	-	-
John Nankeville Master-Pension per Ann: to his Widow during Life or Widowhood	20	-	-
Ditto-to an Aged Mother whom he supported	5	-	-
Annual £	85	-	-
Gratuities			
Richd May-Allowance to an aged Mother	10	-	-
Wounded severely Smart Money			
Wm Edmonds-severely wounded uncertain if he will recover	10	-	-
Jno: Hayman-ditto-Ball thro' his right Arm, doubtful if he will recover its use	10	-	-
Jno: Macklaine-Ball in the Thigh, not yet extracted	10	-	-
Jno: Francisco-Wounded in the Head, part of his Scull carried away by a Musket Ball	10	-	-
Carrd Ford £	50	-	-
Brot. Forwd £	50	-	-
Wounded slightly			
Wm Redgard-Mate, wounded in the Head by a Musket Ball	100	-	-
James Jones-Splinter in the Arm	5	-	-

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John Rodney-Burnt by the Explosion of a Cartridge	5	-	-
Lewis Brown-ditto	5	-	-
Robt Wright-wounded in the Leg	5	-	-
Thos Bryant-By a Splinter slightly	5	-	-
14 Able Seamen at £ 3-3s/-each	44	2	-
1 Ordinary at £ 2-2s/-	2	2	-
	£261	4[1]	

Copy, General Post Office, London, Treasury Letter Books, 1783-1859, Vol. 22, pp. 321-24. The letter books, together with Packet Report Books and Packet Minute Books, constitute a rarely used source of information concerning actions between American privateers and packets. This and the following document are reproduced by courtesy of Post Office Archives.

[1] The figures total only £ 221 4s.

SIR GEORGE HARRISON TO THE POSTMASTER GENERAL

Treasury Chambers
11th Dec 1812

(Copy)
My Lords

Having laid before the Lords Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury, your Lordships letter of the 1st Inst: enclosing a List of Pensions, Smart Money & Gratuities proposed to be allowed to the Officers & Crew of the *"Princess Amelia"* Packet, & to the Relatives of those who fell in action with the American Privateer *"Rossie"* of 12 guns and 95 men on 14th September last, the former amounting to £ 85 per Ann: and the latter to £ 261 4s-which under the Circumstances stated, your Lordships request authority to pay-I have it in command to authorize your Lordships to pay the same accordingly. I am [&c.]

Geo: Harrison[1]

The Postmaster General

Copy, General Post Office, London, Treasury Letter Books, 1783-1859, Vol. 22, pp. 325.

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[1] Harrison had served as assistant secretary of the treasury since 1805.

Saratoga: A New York Privateer

One of the most active American privateers in the Caribbean during the first year of the War of 1812 was Captain Charles Wooster's schooner Saratoga. *During her career in this war,* Saratoga *took approximately 22 ships.*[1] *As can be seen from the following journal, Captain Wooster was not one to shrink from close action.*

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[1] *Maclay,* American Privateers, *p. 454.*

Lieutenant's Journal of the Schooner *Saratoga*

[Extract] 11 December 1812

Moderate Trades and pleaseat weather At 1/2 past 12 a Sail hove in sight to windward Tacked and Stood in for our boat being on shore for the Capt at 2 PM our boat returned with the Capt, immediately, made all Sail in chase at 1/2 Past 3 perceived an English Jack at the foretopmast head of a schooner at 4 Tacked Stood in shore to endeaver to cut her off. on which she hauled in for the land Sent our small boat with six men armed, in order if possible to take charge of her before she could reach the shore at 1/2 past 4 the boat boarded her She hauled down her colours within half Pistol Shot of the beach, took possession of her and stood off Laguira bearing at the same time S.W. 4 Leagues dist. She proved to be the British schooner *Mariah*. belonging to St Thomas 4 days out bound to Laguira Laden with 40 bbls Flour & 50 Boxes Trunks of dry goods retained one prisoner on board Sent the remainder with their baggage on shore they being English French and Spaniards at the request of the american consul took Capt Moncreef and 10 men on board who had been 5 or 6 months on shore at Laguira at 6 PM Laguira bore S. S.W 6 Leagues dist Stoot [*stood*] off and on under Easy Sail Prize in [Com] 6 a.M Laguira bore S 5 Leagues distant. Tacked and Stood in at 8 AM Saw a Brig to the westward Standing to the North by the wind Hauled the Prize along Side and took out a part of the most valuable Goods Put Mr Boggs and F Bergman his mate on board with 4 men gave instructions for her to Stand in Shore in case we lost Sight of her she

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would lay off and on for two or three days if we should not be able to find her in that time to proceed direct to Carthagena and there await our arrival, At 1/2 past 8 aM made all Sail in chase of the Brig at 9 Set English Ensign and Pendant on which she Hoisted an English Ensign, Called all hands to quarters and cleared for action at 10 gave her a shot and hoisted American Ensign and Pendant the shot cut away her Stern boat, she returned our fire with her Stern chasers, At 1/4 past 10 the action commenced, distant from Each other 1/4 mile at 11 the shot from the Enemy carried away our fore topsail yard at the same time the Axeltree of the after gun gave away which rendered it unfit for Service Torn Breechings of the principal guns in the waist parted; finding She would not Strike made Sail to get in shore to windward of her in order to board 10 minutes past 11 the fireing ceased on both Sides all hands Employed repairing damages at meridian the Enemy a Stern Standing the Same way with us

12 December 1812

commences with Strong Breezes E. NE. Heavy swell on could not fight with our Lee guns Sent up a new topsail Yard 1/2 past 12 the Enemy Tacked at 1 having repair'd all damages Tacked and made sail after her 1/2 past one came up to the windd of him Hove too, to send a flag of truce on board to inform him of the force and number of men of the *Saratoga* with the determination that if they did not haul down her colours Every man on board should be put to death he heaving too for the space of five minuites then made Sail from our boat, Set our English Jack forwarded and made Sail after him 1/2 past 2 came up within hail of him Sumoned him frequently to Strike otherwise abide by the consequence, which he refused to do at the same time having his colours nailed to the Peak we Stood ready for Boarding the Enemy shot ahead we recommenced with round and grape at 3/4 past 2 Bore up athwart his stern and raked him, rounded too, to board him fired several vollies of musketry into him which drove all his men below who were able to get there we ceased fireing she fell off along side of us we grapld to her the grapling Lanyards parted, one officer Mr Dexter and 2 men Richd Pemberton and Charles Rowland got on board by the Jib guys found only one man on deck alive who was trying too haul down the colours at 3 his Colours were hauled down by Mr Dexter one of our own officers on our part 2 men wre wounded (not mortally) the capt. and 2 men of the

Enemys Ship Lay dead on deck and two wounded one of which died soon after Nothwithstanding the careful and humane attendance of our Surgeon, she proved to be the Brig *Rachel* from Greenock commanded by Capt N Dalmarhoy mounting 14 guns mounting, 14 Guns maned with 36 men out 57 days–the damages done the *Saratoga* were of no great consequence Three shrouds shot away, mainsail fore top Sail and Jib were cut by the shot of the Enemy, a number of Grape shot in our foremast. Brails Braces &c cut away our stabourd Bulwark stove in (a little) by the vessels Strikeinng each other.

The Enemys damage, Four shot 2 between wind and water his sails rigging and spars cut very badly, Sent our carpenter on board to repair her at 4 PM Lost Sight of our prize schooner Received the greater part of the Brig *Rachel*s Prisoners on board, All hands employed repairing damages At 5 PM another Brig hove in sight cleared ship for another action our Prize Brig in Co at 5.50 Cape Blanco W. S.W Distant 6 Leagues at 9.30 Beat to Quarters at 9.40 came up with the chase Brought her too and boarded her she proved the Spanish Brig *San Hosa* [*José*] 57 days from Cadiz bound to Porto Cabello, at 10 permited her to pass Tacked and stood in shore prize in Co at 11 calm continued calm all night at 8 am. Light Breezes from the Eastward run under the Lee of our prize took out some canvass stores &c sent on board 2 casks water kept 4 of the prisoners on board the *Rachel* and 2 on board the *Saratoga*. gave the remainder 27 in number the Long boat of Brig to proceed to Laguira we being too Short of water to detain them, Supplied them with provisions and water and they made sail for the land, all hands employed repairing sails rigging &c.
Wind E NE. Land near, Laguira in sight

D, "Journal Kept on Board the Private Armed Vessel *Saratoga* Charles W. Wooster Esq Commander By Abram Judah for John Backus 2d Lieut'," Navy Department Library, Special Collections, Naval Historical Center, Washington, D.C.

best copy available

Midshipman Feltus of the Frigate *Essex*

One of the surviving accounts of Captain David Porter's Essex *and her exploits in the Pacific is to be found in the journal of Midshipman William W. Feltus. Little is known about Feltus, except that he received his appointment on 1 September 1811, and served at the New York Navy Yard and in Gunboat* No. 106. *He joined* Essex *on 25 September 1812 at Chester on the Delaware River. In December 1813, Feltus was transferred to* Greenwich, *one of* Essex's *prizes. He was one of several officers left under the command of Marine Lieutenant John Gamble, on the island of Nuku Hiva, when Captain Porter sailed for Valparaiso. Gamble's men were to take care of Porter's prizes, but they became involved in disputes with the natives. Midshipman Feltus is reported to have been murdered with several others on 7 May 1814.*[1]

The following accounts are drawn from Feltus's journal: the first describes a typical "crossing the line" ceremony, remarkably similar to those held today. The ceremony was a traditional diversion from shipboard routine, even in time of war, affording an opportunity for considerable sport and good humor. The second journal excerpt shows how rapidly such diversions could melt away to the more serious business of taking prizes. Essex *chased and captured a handsome ship on the following day. She was* Nocton, *10 guns, bound from Brazil to England.*

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[1] *Porter,* Memoir, *pp. 249-51.*

JOURNAL OF MIDSHIPMAN WILLIAM W. FELTUS
"KEPT ON BOARD THE US. FRIGATE *ESSEX*"

[Extracts]
[23 November 1812][1]

DESCRIPTION OF THE CEREMONIES performed on board the *Essex* on Crossing the line or tropics.

When the ship was supposed to be about on the line the man at the mast head was directed to cry Sail OI & being asked by the officer of the deck where away & what she looked like he answered. a small boat on the Lee bow. then the officer of the deck hailed and asked what boat that was, he was answered that it was Neptunes the god of the seas, & that he wished permission to come on board with his train. as soon as It was granted one of the B Mates with some others being in the fore chains, came over the Bows and mounted their carriage (made of some boards lashed together on an old gun carriage having two chairs lashed there on for Neptune & his wife) this carriage was drawn by 4 men some with their shirts off & their Bodies painted & others with their trowsers cut off above the knees & their legs painted & their faces painted in this manner accompanied by his Barbers with their razors made of an Iron hoop & constables & Band of music they marched on the quarter deck where he dismounted with his wife and spoke to the Captain for permission to shave such as had not crossed the line before officers excepted, provided that they would pay some rum, this was granted. they immeadiately got into one of the boats filled with water with all his barbers (those that had not been across the line before were ordered below) and 1 was brought up at a time.

* * *

Remarks Dec 12th 1812.
Commences moderate and Pleasant at 2 discd a sail on the weather Bow 1 pt. made sail in chase at 4 tacked still in chase Squally and flying clouds at sun down chase still on the weather Bow having the appearance of an armed Brig Beat to quarters and cleared for action at 7 PM drew up to the chase Hailed her and told Her to heave too she attempted to run to Leeward at which we fired a volley of Musketry at Her. Killed 1 man and cut her Rigging very much she proved to be his Britannic Majesties Packet *Nocton* of 10 Guns from Rio-Bound to England having on board 12000 £ sterling at 7 AM ran foul of Her & carried away part of Her Starbd quarter & our Sprit-Yard & cat Head.

W W Feltus

Lat acc	Long in	Correct Long	variant
[0°] 38 South	25° 49'W	27° 30'W	1 1/2 W

Remarks Dec 13th 1812
at 1 Mr [Midshipman William] Finch went on board with Mr [Midshipman Thomas] Conover and his crew and departed for the US at 1/2 past 2 made sail at 4 Brig out of sight set up the rigging Ends Pleasant.

Lat acc	Obsvd	D Long	Long in
1° 18'S	1° 33'S	30	26° 19'W

ADS, PHi, Journal of William W. Feltus, 1812-1814.

1. This passage, entered at the end of Feltus's journal, is undated. The *Essex* crossed the Tropic of Cancer, on her southward journey, on 23 Nov. 1812. David Porter, *Journal of a Cruise Made to the Pacific Ocean*, 2nd ed., 2 vols. (New York, 1822; reprint ed., Upper Saddle River, N.J., 1970), I: 15 and chart between pp. 22 and 23.

Preparations for Manning the 74s

On 23 December 1812, Congress passed legislation vital to the growth of the navy. Spurred on by several single-ship victories and by the active lobbying of officers and naval-minded citizens, Congress authorized the building of four 74-gun ships of the line and six 44-gun frigates. Acting quickly, Senator Samuel Smith, who had at one time been acting secretary of the navy, requested Secretary Hamilton to provide a projection of the numbers of officers and men that would be required in the larger navy. The documentation which follows is that provided by Hamilton in response to this request. The ships, when constructed, would more than double the navy's manpower needs. In fact, the ships of the line were only partially completed by the end of the War of 1812. The real impact of this legislation was felt in the post-war era when it became the basis of a permanent navy which in time would rival those of Britain and France in size, reach, and capability.

Secretary of the Navy Hamilton to Samuel Smith

Navy Depart.
24 Decr 1812

Honble Genl Saml Smith
Chairman of a Committee
of the Senate

The papers herewith transmitted & marked A, B, C, D, E & F will I hope furnish all the requisite information upon the points contemplated in the Memoranda which I had the honor to receive from you yesterday. I have the honor [&c.]

Paul Hamilton

A

Exhibit shewing the number of Commission officers & midshipmen requisite for the vessels of War now in Commission & ordered to be fitted for the Service of the United States specifying the vessels.

Vessels	Captains	Masters Commt	Lieutenants	Surgeons	Surgeons' Mate	Chaplains	Midshipmen
Frigate							
President	1		5	1	2	1	16
Constitution	1		5	1	2	1	16
United States	1		5	1	2	1	16
Constellation	1		5	1	2	1	12
Chesapeake	1		5	1	2	1	12
Congress	1		5	1	2	1	12
Macedonian	1		5	1	2	1	12
Essex	1		4	1	2	1	12
Adams	1		4	1	2	1	12
John Adams		1	3	1	1		8
Hornet		1	3	1	1		8
Alert		1	3	1	1		8
Argus		1	2	1	1		6
Siren		1	2	1	1		6
Vixen		1	2	1			4
Oneida		1	2	1			6
Madison		1	2	1			6
Enterprize		1	2	1			4
Viper			3	1			4
Scorpion			2	1			2
	9	9	69	20	23	9	182

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B

List of Midshipmen appointed in U S Navy prior to 20th June 1806, the [date] on which those now nominated was appointed.

Walter Boyd	date of warrant	4th Augt 1800
Walter G. Anderson		1st May 1803
John R. Sherwood		30 May "
Charles Jones		6 July 1804
Jacob Hite		2 April "
Charles W. Rivers		" " "
St Clair Eliott [*Elliott*]		" " "
Robert Speden [*Spedden*]		" " "
James McGlaughon		18 June "
John R. Madison		28 " "
Charles A Budd		22 Novr 1805
Samuel Renshaw		4 July "

C

Periods of actual Service of the Midshipmen, now nominated to the Senate for Lieutenants in the Navy

Decr 24th 1812

Wm Finch	with occasional furloughs for short periods has been in actual Service since his appointment	
Wm B. Shubrick	In actual Service nearly the whole period since his appointment	
Henry Wells	the same	They have all been in actual Service on ship board Six years.
B.W. Booth	the same	
Alexr Claxton	the same	
Glen Drayton	the same	
Enos R. Davis	the same	

D

List of Pursers in the Navy who have been nominated and confirmed by the Senate, & who are now commissioned with their employment

Names.	Where employed
Isaac Garretson	*Constellation*
Samuel Hambleton	Newport R.I.
Clement S. Hunt	*President*
Gwinn Harris	St Mary's Georgia
John H. Carr	Charleston S. Ca
Nathl Lyde	Settling his accounts
James R. Wilson	New York Yard
Samuel Robertson	*Congress*
Samuel Maffitt [*Maffit*]	*Chesapeake*
Robt C. Ludlow	*Constitution*
Robt Pottinger	*Siren*
John B. Timberlake	*United States*
Thos J. Chew	Boston Yard
Thos Shields	New Orleans
Richard C. Archer	Gosport Yard
Lewis Deblois	Washington Yard
George S. Wise	*Macedonian*
Francis A. Thornton	*Hornet*
Humphrey Magrath	*Viper*
Edwin T. Satterwhite	*Vixen*
James M. Halsey	Wilmington N.C.
Edward Fitzgerald	Gunboats Lake Ontario
Alexr P. Darragh	*Oneida*
Edwin W. Turner	*Enterprize*
Robert Ormsby	*Argus*
Ludlow Dashwood	Portland, Maine

E

The number of Commission Captains in the Navy is		17
of this number there are		
at Navy Yards	4	
at St Mary's Georgia	1	
at Charleston S.C.	1	
at Sackett's harbor N.Y.	1	
at New Orleans	1	
Suspended by Court Martial	1	
		9

Leaving for Service on shipboard	8
The number required for service on shipboard is pr paper A	9
Deficient	1

Decr 24. 1812

The number of Commission Masters Commandant in the Navy is		9
of this number there are		
at Baltimore	1	
Late Commander of the *Wasp*	1	
at New York Yard	1	
On Lake Ontario	1	
At Newport R.I.	1	
		5
Leaving for Service on Shipboard		4
The Number required for Service on shipboard is pr paper A		9
Deficient		5

This deficiency is at present supplied by Lieutenants commanding

F

If the Bill authorizing the building of Four ships of the Line & Six frigates, should be passed into a Law, the following additional Officers will be necessary

Captains		
For the 4 Ships of the Line & frigates	10	
deficient pr paper A	1	
So that the present number of Captains must be encreased		11

This would raise all the Masters Commandant & two of the Lieutenants to Captains.

Masters Commandant

Required for the vessels in Commission pr paper A	9	
for shore stations pr paper E	4	
whole number required		13

Lieutenants

The number deficient pr paper E	25	
By promotions to Captains & masters commandant this number will be encreased	15	
The 4 Ships of the Line will require	24	
The 6 frigates will require	30	
Whole number of additional Lieutenants that it will be necessary to nominate		94
of this number there is now before the Senate		7
Leaving to be nominated hereafter		87

Pursers

Number of Ships & Stations pr paper D	33	
The 4 Ships of the Line & 6 frigates will require	10	
whole number required		43
of this number there are now in Commission & confirmed in the Senate	27	
appointed during the late Recess and now nominated	7	
Gentlemen not heretofore appointed but now nominated	2	36

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So that when the nine now nominated
are nominated there will still be a
deficit of 7 pursers

Copy, DNA, RG45, Secretary of the Navy Letters to Congress, Vol. 1, pp. 127-31.

Tightening the Blockade

Despite Admiral Warren's requests from Halifax, reinforcements for the Royal Navy on the North American station were slow in arriving. At the same time the Admiralty had in mind a more rigorous blockade, particularly of the southern ports of the United States. Strengthening the blockade meant pulling ships from fleets in the English Channel, in the Mediterranean, and on blockade duty in the Bay of Biscay. The following document shows that British orders for blockade emanated from the highest level of government. Orders of this type brought the shock of war to Chesapeake Bay during 1813 and 1814 with a severity that surprised Washington, Alexandria, Baltimore and the surrounding area.

Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to Admiral Sir John B. Warren, R.N.

Secret

Whereas the Earl Bathurst one of His Majesty's Principal Secretaries of State,[1] hath by his Letter of the 25th instant, signified to us, the Pleasure of His Royal Highness the Prince Regent that immediate Orders be given for establishing the most complete and vigorous Blockade, of the Ports and Harbours of the Bay of the Chesapeake and of the River Delaware; We do in addition to our Order to you of the 27th of last Month herewith send you a copy of Earl Bathurst's abovementioned Letter & do hereby require and direct You to establish the most complete and vigorous Blockade of the Ports and Harbours of the Bay of the Chesapeake and of the River Delaware, and to maintain and enforce the same according to the usages of War under the Regulations pointed out in his Lordships said Letter.

Given under our Hands 26th Decr 1812

Melville
W. Domett
Geo. J. Hope[2]

To
The Right Honble
Sir John Borlase Warren Bt & K.B.
Admiral of the Blue &c &c
Bermuda

Copy, UkLPR, Adm. 2/1375 (Secret Orders and Letters), pp. 337-38.

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[1] Henry Bathurst, 3rd Earl Bathurst (1762-1834), secretary for war and the colonies in the cabinet of Lord Liverpool.

[2] Robert Saunders Dundas, 2nd Viscount Melville (1771-1857), first lord of the admiralty, 1812-1827; Vice Admiral Sir William Domett (1754-1828), commissioner, 1808-1813; Rear Admiral Sir George Johnstone Hope, K.C.B. (1767-1818), commissioner, 1812-1818.

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William Jones, Future Secretary of the Navy

The singular success of U.S. Navy frigates in ship-to-ship combat was a tonic to the nation at a time of military defeats on the Canadian frontier, but all was not well within the Navy Department. Secretary of the Navy Paul Hamilton had performed as a satisfactory administrator during peacetime, but under the pressure of war, he was unable to keep pace with the work and had developed an addiction to alcohol.[1] *While this was widely known at that time, it had been difficult for Hamilton's opponents to effect his removal because of the pending reelection of President Madison. Once Madison's reelection was certain, his party exerted pressure to remove both Secretary of War Eustis and Secretary of the Navy Hamilton. A prime candidate for the navy post was William Jones of Philadelphia, but it was not known whether he would accept the post. Congressman Jonathan*

Roberts of Pennsylvania wrote a persuasive letter on 28 December to convince Jones to accept the post if it were offered.

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[1] *See Irving Brant,* James Madison, Commander in Chief, 1812–1836 *(New York, 1961), pp. 125–26.*

CONGRESSMAN JONATHAN ROBERTS TO WILLIAM JONES

Washington
Dec 28th 1812

My Dear Sir

I wishd to have seen you as I came onto this place but the evening I spent in your City was unpropitious to that wish. It was that on which Mr Connelly was buried as well as that of your electoral election. I have forborne to intrude a letter on you hitherto as from the commencement of this session ours has been a state of suspense of oscillation between light hopes & strong apprehensions. It early suggested itself that under the strongest convictions of the public mind of the incompetency of the heads of the War & Navy Offices that it would be right to wait the issue of the election which was at least doubtful before plain dealing with the president should be commenced on those subjects. The fourth Wednesday in december came round & secured to us a Prest. in whose virtue we have unlimited confidence & whose feelings as a gentlemen appear to be the only blemish in his character. With one accord our friends in both houses resolved in our places & out of our places to press the appointing powers to an exercise of its functions. This disposition had its foundation in the purest wishes for the public good no local or personal feeling had the slightest operation in it. Dr [William] Eustis gave ground at once & however he might have faild to fill his office with success he quit it with a mgnanimity that has enabled him to [carry] away a very general respect. It is now impossible Mr Hamilton [can] remain no point was ever more clearly ascertaind than that he ought not to remain in office. I have more than once intimated [to our] revered friends Fox & Connelly that it was I believed the universal wish that in case the office became vacant you should take it. The reply I got from our friends to this part of my letters was not [plain?] as to the probability of your willingness to lend your aid to your country's councils. When I learnd from Mr [Nathaniel] Macon yesterday that you had directly declind to be considered as elegible to appointment I felt a dispossition to dispair for the fate of the ark of our public safety more than ever. On a little reflection a hope revivd that as your objections tho' weighty being all of a private character might be removd when a public call should [be] made upon you under a state of public suffering to be relievd only by your saving hand. We would in that case have decreed that your private affairs should be conducted at the public expence as was greatly done by the ancient Romans when they calld a citizen from his field to be their Dictator. Be assured sir the vacancy about to occur has not been effected thro' a hope of getting your services but from the impossibility of proceeding with Mr Hamilton. Get who we may we cannot get a man so little fit for his duty. To induce you to enter the public service I am sure it is not necessary to tell you that the office which it is wishd you should fill is popular & that it would be impossible but it must become more so the moment you enter it. The temper of your mind is of another character it would be stimulated by obstacles Here there can be no hazard of success while there is enough to employ all your faculties. Our country to use our friend Foxes words "have indeed a treasure in Mr Gallitin" he wants support.

Great as he is yet one opposed to all
oppressed by mutitudes the best may fall

he must quit the field of the revenue unless the expenditure is brought within more reasonable bounds. I know not what to say to overcome your repugnance to enter the councils a great & intrepid mind must see these are no ordinary inducements a virtuous one can hardly fail to yield to the pressing instance of the times. I know it can be no reason for you to accept the office we wish to tell you we mean to place it on a footing as to salary with the offices of State & the Treas. I only mention it incedentally.

Let me obtest you my dear Sir to let no private considerations allow you to decline the public service if you are calld upon & I have no doubt but you will be calld upon. The Nation & the Navy point to you as the fittest man we have & what is to become of us if the fittest man will not come forward in a moment of public danger. I beg you to forgive my importunity my apology for it is that I am urged to use it from such considerations only as would govern your conduct were you to enter the cabinet–a regard for the public good. With sincerest respect & friendship I am &c.

Jonathan Roberts[1]

Capt W. Jones

ALS, PHi, U. C. Smith Collection, Papers of William Jones, folder Oct.–Dec. 1812.

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[1] Jonathan Roberts, a Republican from Pennsylvania, served as a member of the House of Representatives from Mar. 1811 to Feb. 1814, when he was elected to the United States Senate to fill a vacancy caused by the resignation of Michael Leib. Roberts was reelected as a senator in 1815 and served in that capacity until 1821. For the political context in Pennsylvania, and Roberts's and local Republicans John Connelly and Edward Fox's support for the war, see Victor A. Sapio, *Pennsylvania & the War of 1812* (Lexington, Ky., 1970), esp. pp. 132–45.

Licenses and Rewards

Not long after his celebrated return in United States *with the prize frigate* Macedonian, *Commodore Decatur wrote the secretary of the navy on a matter of previous concern (see pp. 526–27), but which was still unresolved. This was the question of the licensed trade, so annoying to navy commanders, who thought Congress should prohibit such practices. Decatur's seizure of several licenses found on board* Mandarin *had become an embarrassment, with the owners importuning him for their licenses.*

At the time, however, the secretary of the navy was more concerned with how to compensate Decatur and his crew for their capture of Macedonian. *It was of critical importance to determine whether* Macedonian *was of equal or inferior force compared to* United States. *If* Macedonian *had been of equal or greater force, Congress would have voted the whole of her value as prize money to the crew of* United States. *This, however, was not the case. Decatur's ship was larger, heavier, carried more guns, and had a larger complement.*[1] *The second document contains Secretary Hamilton's thoughts on* Macedonian's *evaluation, prior to the event.*

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[1] *See Roosevelt,* Naval War of 1812, *pp. 70, 112.*

COMMODORE STEPHEN DECATUR TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

New York December 28 1812

Sir,

On the 12th of october last, I had the honour to forward for your disposal a number of British licences addressed to Citizens of the United States which I found on board the Ship *Mandarin* Baker Master-from London bound to Philadelphia. These licences were thus diverted from the course of their original destination, under a belief I then had, that the Government of the United States would interdict the use of such protections to their citizens, by the time of the *Mandarins* arrival at Norfolk, where I intended to send her. I thought too, it might be of some service to have the Government apprised of the extent to which this trade seemed enlarging itself under the protection of the Enemy, and of the individuals concerned in it; especially as it could be done with so little inconvenience to the owners of the licences. These purchases having been answered & the trade not having been made illegal it is my wish that the licenses should be transmitted to their respective owners unless the Government think proper to dispose of them otherwise-in which case, I beg to be advised of it, that I may satisfy owners who are becoming importunate in their applications to me for them. With the highest respect [&c.]

Stephen Decatur

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 224.

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON TO COMMODORE STEPHEN DECATUR

Comr Decatur
N York

Nav: Depm't
29 Decem 1812

The President of the U.S. desires me to express to You & to Lt. [William H.] Allen through You, to the officers & crew, of the frigate *U.S.* his warmest thanks & highest approbation of Your & their conduct on the defeat & capture of his Britanic Majesty's frigate the

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Macedonian. I assure You, sir, that it affords me real happiness to be the Medium of Conveying to You the expression of his feelings & sentiments upon this subject. Permit me also to congratulate You upon this brilliant achievement which adds another laurel to those already justly earned by You.

With respect to the prize, two points namely, her relative force & her value must be immediately ascertained. This can best be done by the appointment of referees on the part of the Department. I nominate Jacob Lewis Esqr now at New York as one of the referees. You will be pleased to appoint another & should the two so appointed disagree, they will choose a third whose decission shall be conclusive.

The objects to be particularly attended to by the referees, are 1. the relative force of the two frigates, the *United States* & the *Macedonian* including her rigging, apparel, armaments, & everything belonging to her-at such valuation the Navy Depmt will purchase her & put her in commission. Should She be considered equal in force to the *United States*, the Department will pay to the Captors the whole amount of her valuation-if of inferior force, one moiety only unless Congress should vote the whole to the captors.

Be pleased to apprise Capt Lewis of his appointment as a referee, & give to the referees a Copy of such parts of this letter as belongs to the Subject.

P. Hamilton

Copy, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 10, pp. 220-21.

Constitution vs. *Java*

Commodore William Bainbridge sailed from Boston in company with U.S. sloop of war Hornet, *commanded by Master Commandant James Lawrence. In accordance with Secretary Hamilton's cruising orders of 9 September, Bainbridge selected his own hunting grounds, sailing toward the Cape Verde Islands and then southwest to Brazil. On 13 December,* Constitution *and* Hornet *arrived off São Salvador (Bahia), Brazil, where they found the British sloop of war* Bonne

Citoyenne *in port. While* Hornet *remained to blockade São Salvador,* Constitution *cruised southward along the coast. She was about thirty miles offshore on 29 December when H.M. frigate* Java, *38-guns, hove in sight with a prize in company. In the following pages Commodore Bainbridge and Lieutenant Henry Chads describe the ensuing action as experienced from the decks of their respective vessels.*

JOURNAL OF COMMODORE WILLIAM BAINBRIDGE

Extract from Commodore
Bainbridge's Journal Kept
on board the U.S. Frigate
Constitution

Tuesday 29th December 1812

At 9 AM, discovered two Strange Sails on the weather bow, at 10. AM. discovered the strange sails to be Ships, one of them stood in for the land, and the other steered off shore in a direction towards us. At 10.45. We tacked ship to the Nd & Wd and stood for the sail standing towards us,-At 11 tacked to the Sd & Ed haul'd up the mainsail and took in the Royals. At 11.30 AM made the private signal for the day, which was not answered, & then set the mainsail and royals to draw the strange sail off from the neutral Coast.[1]

Wednesday 30th December 1812, (Nautical Time) Commences with Clear weather and moderate breezes from E.N.E. Hoisted our Ensign and Pendant. At 15 minutes past meridian, The ship hoisted her colours, an English Ensign,-having a signal flying at her Main Red-Yellow-Red At 1.26 being sufficiently from the land, and finding the ship to be an English Frigate, took in the Main Sail and Royals, tacked Ship and stood for the enemy

At 1.50. P.M, The Enemy bore down with an intention of rakeing us, which we avoided by wearing. At 2, P.M, the enemy being within half a mile, of us, and to wind ward, & having hawled down his colours to dip his Gafft, and not hoisting them again except an Union Jack at the Mizen Mast head, (we having hoisted on board the *Constitution* an American Jack forward Broad Pendant at Main, American Ensign at Mizen Top Gallant Mast head and at the end of The Gafft) induced me to give orders to the officer of the 3rd Division to fire one Gun ahead of the enemy to make him show his Colours, which being done brought on afire from us of the whole broadside, on which he hoisted an English Ensign at the Peak, and another in his weather Main Rigging, besides his Pendant and then immediately returned our fire, which brought on a general action with round and grape.

The enemy Kept at a much greater distance than I wished, but Could not bring him to closer action without exposing ourselves to several rakes.-Considerable Manoeuvers were made by both Vessels to rake and avoid being raked.

The following Minutes Were Taken during the Action.

At 2.10. P.M,	Commenced The Action within good grape and Canister distance. The enemy to windward (but much farther than I wished).
At 2,30. P.M,	our wheel was shot entirely away
At 2.40.	determined to close with the Enemy, notwithstanding her rakeing, set the Fore sail & Luff'd up close to him.
At 2,50,	The Enemies Jib boom got foul of our Mizen Rigging
At 3	The Head of the enemies Bowsprit & Jib boom shot away by us
At 3.5	Shot away the enemies foremast by the board
At 3.15	Shot away The enemies Main Top mast just above the Cap
At 3.40	Shot away Gafft and Spunker boom
At 3.55	Shot his mizen mast nearly by the board
At 4.5	Having silenced the fire of the enemy completely and his colours in main Rigging being [down] Supposed he had Struck, Then hawl'd about the Courses to shoot ahead to repair our rigging, which was extremely cut, leaving the enemy a complete wreck, soon after discovered that The enemies flag was still flying hove too to repair Some of our damages.
At 4.20.	The Enemies Main Mast went by the board.
At 4.50	[Wore] ship and stood for the Enemy
At 5.25	Got very close to the enemy in a very [effective] rakeing position, athwart his bows & was at the very instance of rakeing him, when he most prudently Struck his Flag.

Had The Enemy Suffered the broadside to have raked him previously to strikeing, his additional loss must have been extremely great laying

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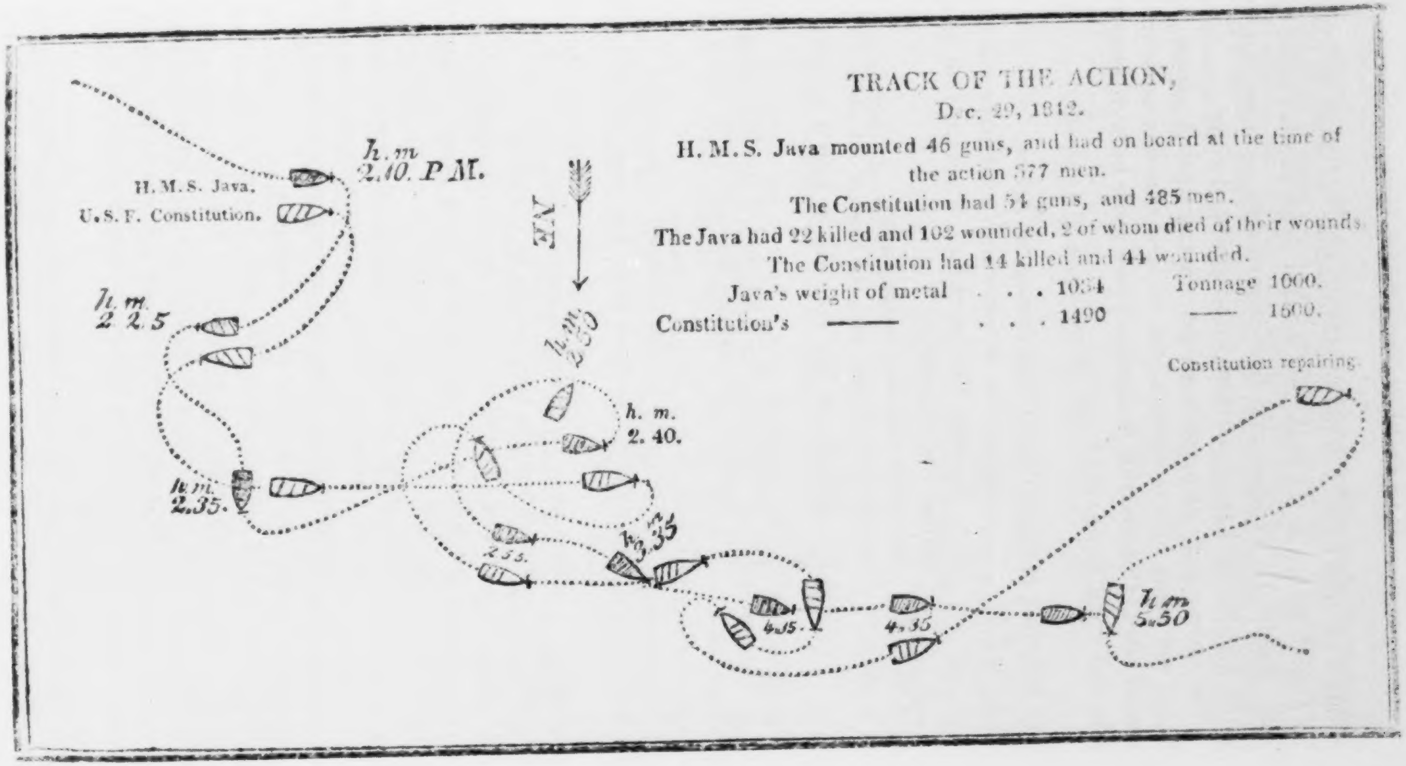


TRACK OF THE ACTION,

Dec. 29, 1812.

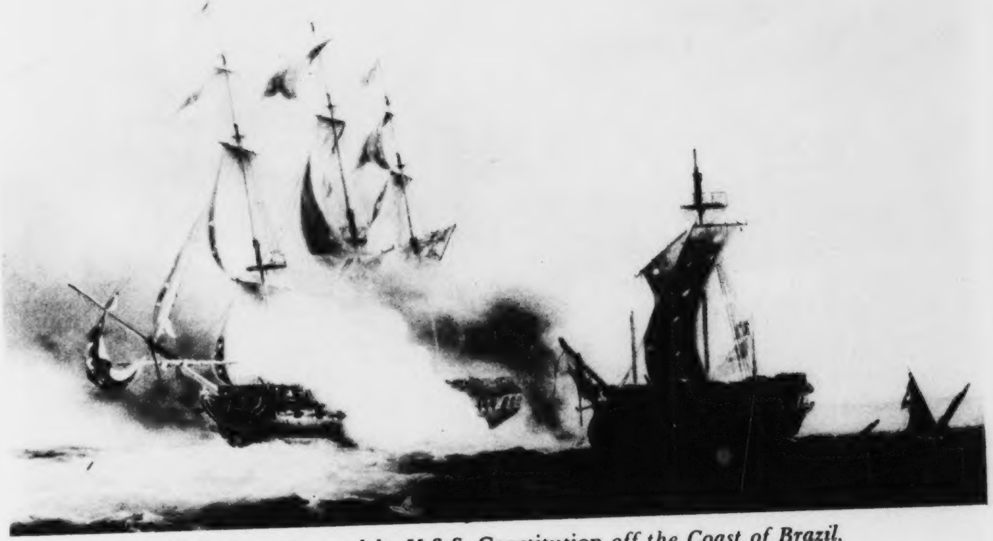
H. M. S. Java mounted 46 guns, and had on board at the time of the action 577 men.

The Constitution had 54 guns, and 485 men.

The Java had 22 killed and 102 wounded, 2 of whom died of their wounds.

The Constitution had 14 killed and 44 wounded.

Java's weight of metal	. . . 1034	Tonnage 1000.
Constitution's ———	. . . 1490	——— 1600.



H.M.S. Java *Engaged by U.S.S.* Constitution *off the Coast of Brazil,*
29 December 1812

like a log upon the water, perfectly unmanageable, I could have continued rakeing him without being exposed to more than two of his Guns, (if even Them)

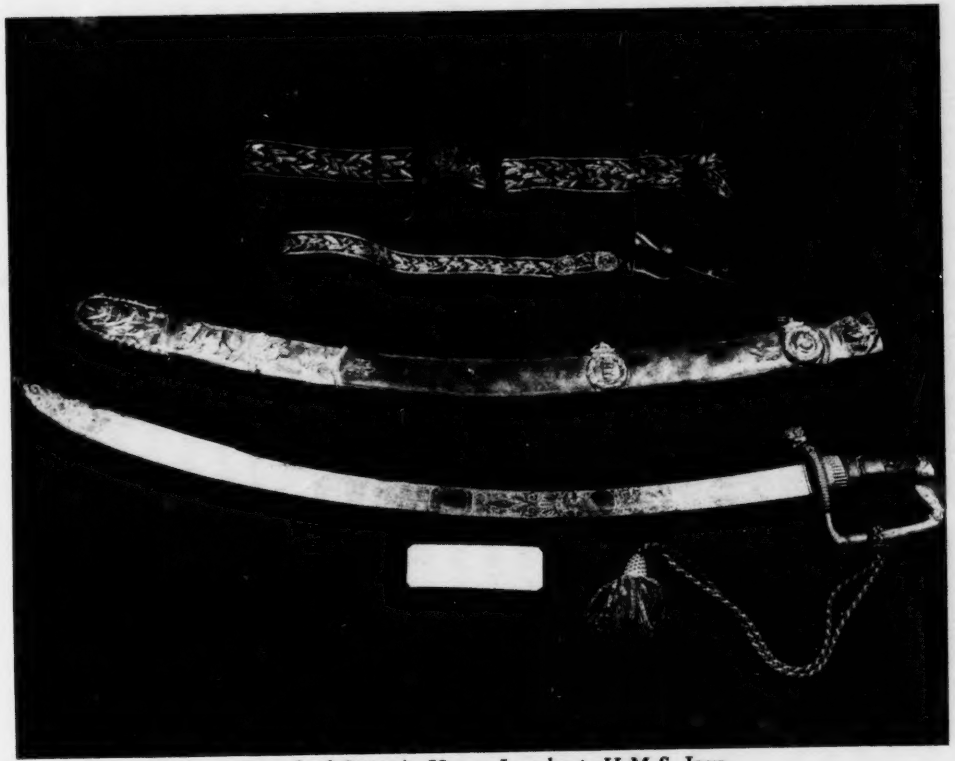
After The Enemy had struck, wore Ship and reefed the Top Sails, hoisted out one of the only two remaining boats we had left out of 8 & sent Lieut [George] Parker 1st of the *Constitution* on board to take possession of her, which was done about 6. P.M, The Action continued from the commencement to the end of the Fire, 1 H 55 m our sails and Rigging were shot very much, and some of our spars injured-had 9 men Killed and 26 wounded. At 7 PM. The boat returned from the Prize with Lieut. [Henry D.] Chads the 1st of the enemies Frigate (which I then learnt was the *Java* rated 38 - had 49 Guns mounted--)-and Lieut Genl [Thomas] Hislop-appointed to Command in the East Indies,-Major Walker and Capt Wood, belonging to his Staff.-Capt [Henry] Lambert of the *Java* was too dangerously wounded to be removed immediately.

The Cutter returned on board the Prize for Prisoners, and brought Capt [John] Marshall, Master & Commander of The British Navy, who was passenger on board, as also Several other Naval officers destined for ships in the East Indies. The *Java* had her whole number complete and nearly an hundred supernumeraries. The number she had on board at the commencement of the Action, The officers have not candour to say; from the different papers we collected, such as a muster book, Watch List and Quarter Bills, she must have had upwards of 400 souls, she had one more man stationed at each of her Guns on both Decks than what we had The Enemy had 83 wounded & 57 Kill'd.

The *Java* was an important ship fitted out in the compleatest manner to [carry out] the Lieut. Genl & dispatches. She had Copper &c. on board for a 74 building at Bombay, and, I suspect a great many other valuables, but every thing was blown up, except the officers baggage when we set her on fire on the 1st of January 1813 at 3 P.M. Nautical Time.

Copy, DNA, RG45, CL, 1813, Vol. 1, No. 8 1/2. Two amended versions of Bainbridge's account of *Java*'s capture are in AF 4.

1. The second vessel was American merchant ship *William*, prize to *Java*, which ran in for the safety of neutral São Salvador only to fall prey to *Hornet*.



Sword of Captain Henry Lambert, H.M.S. Java

LIEUTENANT HENRY D. CHADS TO SECRETARY OF THE ADMIRALTY JOHN W. CROKER

Triplicate

United States Frigate *Constitution*
off St Salvador Decr 31st 1812

Sir

It is with deep regret that I write you for the information of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty that His Majesty's Ship *Java* is no more, after sustaining an action on the 29th Inst for several hours with the American Frigate *Constitution* which resulted in the Capture and ultimate destruction of His Majestys Ship. Captain Lambert being dangerously wounded in the height of the Action, the melancholy task of writing the detail devolves on me.

On the morning of the 29th inst at 8 AM off St Salvador (Coast of Brazil) the wind at NE. we perceived a strange sail, made all sail in chace and soon made her out to be a large Frigate; at noon prepared for action the chace not answering our private Signals and backing towards us under easy sail; when about four miles distant she made a signal and immediately tacked and made all sail away upon the wind, we soon found we had the advantage of her in sailing and came up with her fast when she hoisted American Colours. she then bore about three Points on our lee bow at 1:50 PM the Enemy shortened Sail upon which we bore down upon her, at 2:10 when about half a mile distant she opened her fire giving us her larboard broad-side which was not returned till we we were close on her weather bow; both Ships now manœuvered to obtain advantageous positions; our opponent evidently avoiding close action and firing high to disable our masts in which he succeeded too well having shot away the head of our bowsprit with the Jibboom and our running rigging so much cut as to prevent our preserving the weather gage At 3:5 finding the Enemys raking fire extreemly heavy Captain Lambert ordered the Ship to be laid on board, in which we should have succeeded had not our foremast been shot away at this moment, the remains of our bowsprit passing over his taffrail, shortly after this the main topmast went leaving the Ship totally unmanageable with most of our Starboard Guns rendered useless from the wreck laying over them At 3:30 our Gallant Captain received a dangerous wound in the breast and was carried below, from this time we could not fire more than two or three guns until 4:15 when our Mizen mast was shot away the Ship then fell off a little and brought many of our Starboard Guns to bear, the Enemy's rigging was so much

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cut that he could not now avoid shooting ahead which brought us fairly Broadside and Broadside. Our Main yard now went in the slings both ships continued engaged in this manner till 4:35 we frequently on fire in consequence of the wreck laying on the side engaged. Our opponent now made sail ahead out of Gun shot where he remained an hour repairing his damages leaving us an unmanageable wreck with only the mainmast left, and that toterring; Every exertion was made by us during his interval to place this Ship in a state to renew the action. We succeeded in clearing the wreck of our Masts from our Guns. a Sail was set on the stumps of the Foremast & Bowsprit the weather half of the Main Yard remaining aloft, the main tack was got forward in the hope of getting the Ship before the Wind, our helm being still perfect. the effort unfortunately proved ineffectual from the Main mast falling over the side from the heavy rolling of the Ship, which nearly covered the whole of our Starboard Guns. We still waited the attack of the Enemy, he now standing toward us for that purpose. on his coming nearly within hail of us & from his manouvre perceiving he intended a position a head where he could rake us without a possibility of our returning a shot. I then consulted the Officers who agreed with myself that on having a great part of our Crew killed & wounded our Bowsprit and three masts gone, several guns useless, we should not be justified in waisting the lives of more of those remaining whom I hope their Lordships & Country will think have bravely defended His Majestys Ship. Under these circumstances, however reluctantly at 5:50 our Colours were lowered from the Stump of the Mizen Mast and we were taken possession a little after 6. by the American Frigate *Constitution* commanded by Commodore Bainbridge who immediately after ascertaining the state of the Ship resolved on burning her which we had the satisfaction of seeing done as soon as the Wounded were removed. Annexed I send you a return of a killed and wounded and it is with pain I perceive it so numerous also a statement of the comparative force of the two Ships when I hope their Lordships will not think the British Flag tarnished although success has not attended us. It would be presumptive in me to speak of Captain Lamberts merit, who, though still in danger from his wound we still entertain the greatest hopes of his being restored to the service & his Country. It is most gratifying to my feelings to notice the general gallantry of every Officer, Seaman & Marine on board. in justice to the Officers I beg leave to mention them individually. I can never speak too highly of the able exertions of Lieuts. [William A.] Herringham & Buchanan and also Mr. [Batty]

Robinson Master who was severely wounded and Lieuts Mercer and Davis [David *Davies*] of the Royal Marines the latter of whom was also severly wounded. To Capt Jno Marshall RN who was a passenger I am particularly obliged to for his exertions and advice throughout the action. To Lieutt Aplin who was on the Main Deck and Lieutt Sanders who commanded on the Forecastle, I also return my thanks. I cannot but notice the good conduct of the Mates, & Midshipmen. many of whom are killed & the greater part wounded. To Mr T. C. [Thomas Cooke] Jones Surgeon and his Assistants every praise is due for their unwearied assiduity in the care of the wounded. Lieutt General [Thomas] Hislop, Major Walker and Captain [J. T.] Wood of his Staff the latter of whom was severly wounded were solicitous to assist & remain on the Quarter Deck I cannot conclude this letter without expressing my grateful acknowledgement thus publicly for the generous treatment Captain Lambert and his Officers have experienced from our Gallant Enemy Commodore Bainbridge and his Officers. I have the honor to be [&c.]

W [*H*] D Chads, 1st Lieut
of His Majestys late Ship *Java*

To John Wilson Croker Esquire
Secretary
Admiralty.

PS. The *Constitution* has also suffered severly, both in her rigging and men having her Fore and Mizen masts, main topmast, both main topsailyards, Spanker boom, Gaff & trysail mast badly shot, and the greatest part of the standing rigging very much damaged with ten men killed. The Commodore, 5 Lieuts and 46 men wounded four of whom are since dead.

Force of the two Ships

Java.			*Constitution*	
Guns	Crew		Guns	Crew
28 long 18 pours	Ships Compy	277	32 long 24 prs	
16 Caros 32 "	Boys	32	22 Caros 32 "	

2	long 9 "	Supernumery		1	Car 18 "	485
46	weight of metal	description	68	55	weight of metal	
	1034		377		1490	
Tonnage 1000				Tonnage 1450		

Copy, UkLPR, Adm. 1/5435. List of killed and wounded can be found in *The Naval Chronicle* 29: 348-49.

Admiral Warren Requests Reinforcements

On the same day that Constitution *defeated* Java *off the Brazilian coast, Admiral Sir John B. Warren wrote from Bermuda to the Admiralty requesting additional ships and men. His principal complaints concerned the advantage which the large American frigates enjoyed over their British counterparts, the propensity of British seamen to join the American navy after being captured, and the damaging effects of American privateering in the Caribbean and northern waters.*

ADMIRAL SIR JOHN B. WARREN, R.N., TO SECRETARY OF THE ADMIRALTY JOHN W. CROKER

Bermuda 29th Decr 1812

Sir,

In former letters I have already stated the diminution this squadron had undergone, prior to my arrival here, and the inadequacy of the Forces in the present state of the War, to counteract the Enterprizes of the Enemy on the American Coast, and in the West Indies.

I consider it my duty to acquaint their Lordships, that the Ships of War belonging to the American Government, are of very large Class, and altho' denominated Frigates, are constructed to carry 24 Pounders on their Main Deck, with another complete Tier of Guns along the Quarter Deck, Gangway and Forecastle, and manned with from Four hundred and twenty, to upwards of Five hundred prime Seamen and Gunners, which from their superiority in sailing and the number of

Riflemen and Musquetry, give them a manifest advantage over any of our single Frigates, and as the American Cabinet from the recent captures, of the *Guerriere*, *Macedonian*, and Sloops of War have obtained a confidence, and are actively employed encreasing their Marine, and seducing our Seamen into their Service and converting them into American citizens by every art and means in their power, and as many possibly receive aid from some of the detached Squadrons escaping from France. I trust their Lordships will permit [me] to suggest, that the Squadron here would be much benefited by Six or Seven good Sailing, old Ships of the Line, such as the *Canada*, *Captain*, *Bellona*, *Monarch* cut down and reduced as Razies to carry their Lower Deck Guns and heavy carronades on their Quarter Deck, Gangways and Forecastle, manned with three hundred Seamen and Sixty [Marines] likewise, for the reasons I have given that twenty five or thirty Marines and some Seamen should be added to the complement of the Frigates on this Station.

I have endeavoured by keeping two Frigates and a Sloop of War together as divisions, to obviate as much as possible these difficulties, but the Force under my Orders is so extremely small, the extent of Coast very considerable, and with many Convoys to furnish, it is impracticable to cut off the Enemy's resources, or to repress the disorder and pillage which actually exists in a very alarming degree, and will continue, both on the Coast of British America, and in the West Indies, as will be seen by the Copies of Letters herewith enclosed from Sir George Beckwith and Governor Elliot upon that subject, as well as by the representations made to me by Rear Admiral Sir Francis Laforey Bart.[1]

I have ordered the *Junon*, (*Orpheus* as soon as she is refitted at Halifax) and the *Wanderer*, to join Sir Francis Laforey at Barbadoes.

The Swarms of Privateers and Letters of Marque, their numbers now amounting to 600, and the Crews of several having landed at points of the Coast of Nova Scotia and in the Leeward Islands, and cut out of the Harbours some Vessels, render it too necessary immediately to send out a strong addition of Ships, as well as light Gun Brigs for the Nova Scotia District and Bay of Fundy and Gulf of St Lawrence, or the Trade must inevitably suffer, if not be, utterly ruined and destroyed–I have the honor [&c.]

John Borlase Warren

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PS

I request you will inform their Lordships that I have not received any communication from Jamaica since my arrival and consequently cannot make any return of events in that part of my Command-altho' I have written thither by two several conveyances.

Jn Warren

John Croker Esqr

ALS, UkLPR, Adm. 1/503, Part 1, pp. 99-102.

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1. The enclosure Beckwith to Warren, 22 Nov. 1812, is in UkLPR, Adm. 1/503, Part 1, pp. 103-105. The enclosure from Hugh Elliott has not been found. Beckwith was governor of Barbados, and Elliott of the Leeward Islands.

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NOTE ON THE INDEX

Certain aspects of the treatment of persons and vessels in this index supplement annotation in the volume.

PERSONS: The rank of military personnel is the highest rank attained by the individual between the declaration of war, 18 June 1812, and 31 December 1812. When all references to an individual lie outside that span, the rank is the highest applicable to the person at the times to which the text refers. Civilian masters of vessels are identified simply as "Capt." Vessels that civilians and naval personnel commanded during the period 18 June to 31 December 1812 are noted in parentheses at the end of the man's entry.

The rating "Ordinary Seaman" indicates a sailor not yet proficient at his trade, as opposed to an "Able Seaman." The designation "Seaman," however, is less precise. In some contemporary documents, in particular, muster rolls and payrolls, it was used to mean "Able Seaman." In other documents, such as the list of paroled prisoners on pages 480-87, it was used to refer to non-officer naval personnel of almost any rating. Of necessity, the designation "Seaman" in this index is used in that general sense.

VESSELS: The ship nomenclature adopted here is that which best describes the use and rig of a vessel, such as ship of the line, frigate, sloop of war, brig, schooner and sloop. *Sloop of war* includes warships referred to as corvettes, ships, and ship sloops, all of which were three-masted, square-rigged and usually flush-decked. *Brig* includes vessels called brig sloops and gun brigs, which were two-masted, square-rigged and flush-decked. *Sloop* includes sloops and cutters, single-masted, fore-and-aft rigged vessels. When confronted with discrepancies between our two main historical sources, J. J. Colledge, *Ships of the Royal Navy: An Historical Index*, 2 vols. (New York, 1969), and the Admiralty's Ships in Sea Pay list (see pp. 180-82), we have usually followed the latter as the more contemporary authority.

Several vessels are listed by their rate. *Leopard*, a fourth-rate, fifty-gun ship, was no longer considered strong enough to fight in the line of battle. Most British sixth rates were quarterdecked and technically frigates, but to call them such would connote a non-existent parity with fifth-rate frigates. The British termed sixth rates collectively "post ships," the weakest in the Royal Navy commanded by post captains, but the latter term is not widely used.

Since the use and rig of a vessel could vary, nomenclature used to identify vessels refers to the period 18 June to 31 December 1812. When all references to a vessel lie outside that span, the nomenclature is that applicable to the vessel at the time to which the text refers.

The names of commanders of warships, including privateers but not most gunboats, during the period 18 June to 31 December 1812, follow the vessel's entry in parentheses. The names of masters of commercial vessels are so listed when mentioned in the text.

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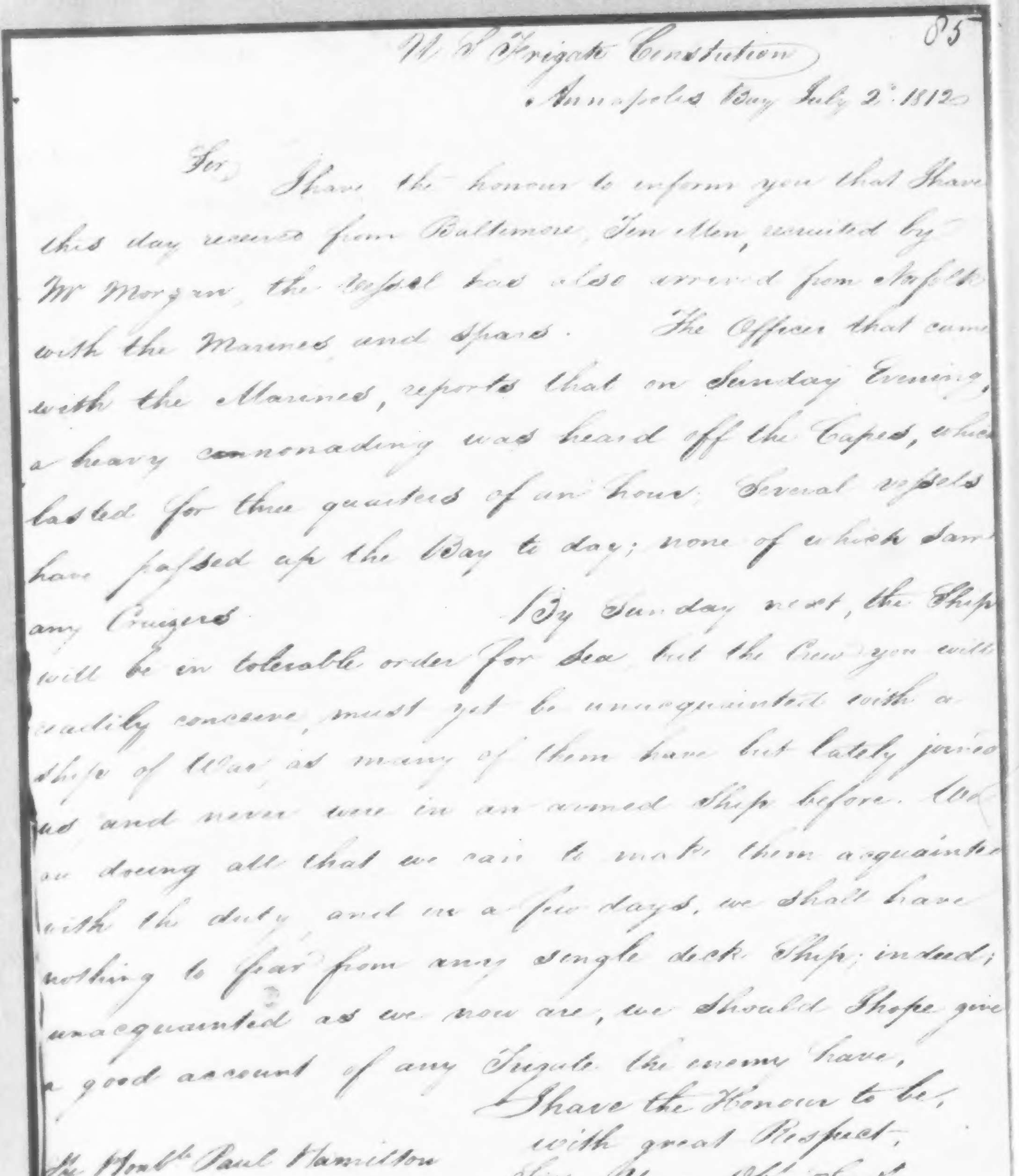

U S Frigate Constitution
Annapolis Bay July 2d 1812

Sir

I have the honour to inform you that I have this day received from Baltimore, Ten Men, recruited by Mr Morgan, the Veſsel has also arrived from Norfolk with the Marines and Spars. The Officer that came with the Marines, reports that on Sunday Evening, a heavy cannonading was heard off the Capes, whic lasted for three quarters of an hour. Several veſsels have paſsed up the Bay to day; none of which saw any Cruisers. By Sunday next, the Ship will be in tolerable order for Sea but the Crew you will readily conceive, must yet be unacquainted with a Ship of War, as many of them have but lately joino us and never were in an armed Ship before. We re doing all that we can to make them acquainte with the duty and in a few days, we shall have nothing to fear from any single deck Ship; indeed, unacquainted as we now are, we should I hope give a good account of any Frigate the enemy have,

I have the Honour to be,
with great Respect,
Sir, Your Obt. Servt.
Isaac Hull

The Honble. Paul Hamilton
Secretary of the Navy

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